

2026-27

BUSINESS PLAN

Revised as of May 1, 2026



MESSAGE

from the Deputy Minister

Transportation is an important part of our day-to-day lives. From where we live and work, to how we access daily needs, a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and easy to access benefits all Nova Scotians.

This is at the core of the work of Link Nova Scotia, a provincial Crown corporation responsible for long-term transportation planning in Nova Scotia. Following the release of the Regional Transportation Plan in August 2025, the agency has been hard at work addressing the transportation challenges of today while furthering our vision for the future network.

As you'll see in the 26-27 Business Plan, the approach Link Nova Scotia is taking is two-fold. Some are the first steps of major projects that, collectively and over time, will transform the transportation system. Others are short-term solutions, which are geared toward offering relief in the meantime.

Alongside advancing priority projects, the transition of Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB) will be a major focus. On May 1, 2026, HHB became an operating division within Link Nova Scotia, transferring all employees, assets, liabilities, and contracts. Over the next year, both organizations will review and merge policies, procedures, and systems to become one entity that maintains operational effectiveness and aligns with future objectives.

Collaboration will remain key for Link Nova Scotia in 26-27. In addition to integrating HHB, the agency will continue partnering with other provincial departments and organizations, such as Public Works and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), to further our collective goals and maximize efficiencies.

I look forward to the work to come.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By_____

Peter Hackett, P.Eng
Deputy Minister, Link Nova Scotia

PRIORITIES

Infrastructure

Adaptive Traffic Signals

Adaptive traffic signals use technology to help make conventional traffic signals smarter and more responsive to actual conditions. Using sensor-based detection and real-time traffic data, these systems automatically adjust signal timing to reflect current traffic conditions rather than relying on pre-set timing plans. By responding dynamically to changing volumes, turning movements, and congestion patterns, adaptive signals can:

- reduce delays and travel times
- improve traffic flow reliability
- decrease stop-and-go conditions
- enhance corridor performance during peak periods and incidents

In partnership with Halifax Regional Municipality, these signals will be implemented along the Macdonald Bridge corridor in 2026.

Technology-based projects help to maximize the efficiency of and investment in the existing transportation system, providing some relief while long-term projects are underway.

Performance target / measures: Installation of Adaptive Traffic Signals in support of a future Regional Transportation Management Centre (RTP Action 1.1.1)

External collaboration / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality

Internal / inter-governmental collaboration: Halifax Harbour Bridges division

Collaboration, relationship-building, and information-sharing

Most of the plan's actions require some level of coordination with municipalities, agencies or other Core Partners—regardless of the lead organization. The need for strong collaboration across departments, all orders of government and organizations within the transportation sector was essential for plan development and will only increase with time. Link Nova Scotia will continue to foster these relationships, working together to improve the transportation system.

With the expanded scope of the agency, emphasis will also need to be placed on building new relationships across the province, including municipalities, transportation operators, and other organizations.

External collaboration / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Port Authority, Halifax International Airport Authority, ACOA, CN, all municipalities in the Region.

Internal / inter-governmental collaboration: Department of Public Works, Halifax Harbour Bridges division

Federal transit funding

Many projects within the Regional Transportation Plan will require significant investment. Securing federal funding is critical to the success of the plan. Nova Scotia has been invited to apply for the Canada Public Transit Fund (CPTF), and in December 2025, submitted a draft Integrated Regional Plan to the federal government.

The projects to be funded under the CPTF are still to be determined but must focus on major transit and active transportation initiatives related to significant housing density.

Performance target / measures: Successful negotiation with the Federal government to access Federal funding.

External collaboration / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, and Municipality of the District of East Hants, with Link Nova Scotia leading the work.

Internal / inter-governmental collaboration: Department of Public Works

Halifax Peninsula Core Streets Review

The Halifax Peninsula has the highest concentration of people, jobs, and services in Nova Scotia. With only five main ways on and off the peninsula, it is one of the most congested areas in the province.

There are competing priorities for space on many streets which often struggle to meet the needs of different modes of transportation and users. While many improvements have been made to the peninsula core streets, a view of how streets are functioning holistically is needed.

In 26-27, a network-level review of the core streets on the Halifax Peninsula, as well as the access on and off, will identify opportunities to improve travel. Recommendations could include reconfiguring the directional flow of key streets, reallocation of space within the right-of-way, or prioritization of specific transportation modes on select corridors.

The review will include detailed modelling work using the activity-based travel demand model owned by Link Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipality.

Performance target / measures: Completing of the review and review of associated recommendations and next steps.

External collaborations / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Port Authority

Internal / inter-governmental collaborations: Halifax Harbour Bridges division

Highway 102 Enhancements and Improvements

Highway 102 is a vital transportation corridor, linking the Halifax Peninsula to the broader region. It also serves as the primary connection to Highways 101, 103, and 107, acting as a central artery for regional and inter-provincial travel.

The demand, particularly between Exits 0 and 4, makes this segment one of the most congested roadways in the province. Enhancements and improvements are needed to improve reliability, safety, and efficiency.

In 26-27, the Highway 102 project will proceed to functional (30 per cent) design. This work will:

- determine how best to move more people and goods while balancing the needs of different modes of transportation, including transit, active transportation and freight
- consider interchange updates, safety improvements and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and/or transit priority measures
- analyze the impact of development along the corridor, including several approved special planning areas
- confirm the feasibility of proposed upgrades, guide long-term investments in the corridor, and help inform future decision-making for the detailed design and construction phases

Performance measures: Completing the functional design and corridor review.

Internal / inter-governmental collaboration: Department of Public Works

Inter-municipal Transit Service

Inter-municipal transit can provide regular, dependable bus service, connecting rural towns and key destinations within HRM. Buses would be equipped for longer-haul trips and carry passengers in comfort at a reasonable cost.

This service can better connect communities, coordinating with existing fixed-route services run by municipalities (Bridgewater, Kings, Halifax). Options for new Park & Rides will be assessed at key locations (like the Halifax Stanfield International Airport) as this could extend transit access to even more people.

Performance target / measures: Public release of a request for information to determine potential vendors and operation models.

External collaborations / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax International Airport Authority, all municipalities in the Region, Community Transportation Operators.

Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

Passenger rail service has the potential to reshape travel in the region by providing a very high-capacity form of transit service. Introducing this service is a significant undertaking, should target areas of potential high ridership, and would represent one of the most significant investments in the province's history.

To fully understand the opportunities and challenges associated with rail service, Link Nova Scotia is conducting a passenger rail feasibility study, which will:

- include a long-term transit phasing strategy to support growth, network resiliency and strategic corridor preservation
- evaluate and screen possible regional and urban corridors
- advance conceptual designs for options in the selected corridors
- provide an evidence-based evaluation of options.

Performance target / measures: Completing the first phase of a passenger rail feasibility study and awarding future phases of work to short-listed vendors.

Collaborations / Partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax International Airport Authority, CN.

Policy action on Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a serious issue in Nova Scotia. Lack of suitable, accessible and affordable transportation options, particularly in rural communities, remains a challenge. In areas where transportation options are limited, the risk of exploitation is higher, including along primary corridors linking rural communities to critical support services in HRM.

In 26-27, Link Nova Scotia will explore opportunities with relevant provincial departments, core partners, and organizations working to combat human trafficking to determine the best way to support ongoing efforts.

Progress on short-term initiatives

In advance of seeing the benefits of long-term infrastructure investments, government's response to the Regional Transportation Plan outlines a series of short-term solutions to manage congestion. These are primarily operational in nature and are transitional measures to alleviate current issues.

Short-term initiatives are smaller scale, highly localized initiatives intended to maximize current infrastructure to improve the commuter experience over the next 18-24 months. While these short-term solutions are not explicitly referenced in the Regional Transportation Plan, they align with and support proposed actions. In 26-27, several short-term initiatives will be completed.

Performance target / measures: Identification of potential areas for HOV lanes. Completion of a corridor and intersection optimization review along the Macdonald Bridge corridor to maximize efficiency in congested areas.

External collaborations / partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality

Internal / inter-governmental collaboration: Department of Public Works, Halifax Harbour Bridges division

Travel Demand Model

Link Nova Scotia will continue to use data to help support evidence-based decision-making, including the use of the activity-based travel demand model. The model is a custom-built software, co-owned with HRM, that allows the agency to test transportation projects and their impacts on the broader regional network.

In 26-27, Link will partner with HRM in participating as Statistics Canada gathers in-depth travel information from residents as part of the Canadian Survey on Everyday Travel. This data will be used to update the model, improving the agency's ability to make data-driven decisions by providing more accurate information for the model.

Further updates to the model in 26-27 include the inclusion of new population projections and ongoing efforts to improve data collection and analysis in collaboration with core partners.

Collaborations / Partnerships: Halifax Regional Municipality, Statistics Canada, all municipalities in the Region.

HALIFAX HARBOUR BRIDGES

During the Spring 2026 session of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, the Province introduced amendments to conclude the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission (HDBC), effective upon proclamation, May 1, 2026.

The legislative change transferred all Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB) employees, assets, liabilities, and contracts to Link Nova Scotia, making HHB an operating division within the agency and dissolving the HDBC Board of Commissioners.

This transition reflects HHB's shift from a revenue-generating, self-sustaining entity following the removal of tolls on the harbour bridges in 2025, and it aligns with government priorities for transportation management. The new reporting structure ensures HHB is best positioned to operate effectively, while also creating efficiencies, leveraging expertise, and supporting actions identified in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Throughout 2026-27, work will take place to move the organizations into one entity, however; bridge operations will continue seamlessly. No jobs will be lost, all existing HHB procedures and legislative powers remain in full force and effect, and all employees will continue to follow HHB's established policies, guidelines, and practices, unless and until otherwise advised. For unionized staff, collective agreements and bargaining units remain intact.

Safety is, and will always remain, the top priority for HHB. The MacKay and Macdonald Bridges will continue to be regularly inspected, and funding for maintenance is now part of Government's annual budget.

PRIORITIES

Taking care of the bridges

- **Steel and Paint Program:** Complete detailed inspection, steel repairs, and coating applications to the Macdonald bridge.
- **Paint Program at MacKay:** Use trained HHB staff to sandblast and paint the Mackay Bridge towers, cable bent, box girders.
- **Main Cable Dehumidification:** Protect the cables - Begin planning and design for main cable dehumidification and cable fire/cutting protection on the MacKay Bridge, with completion scheduled in fiscal 2027; Design the retrofit of the Macdonald dehumidification system to ensure it meets cable protection goals, with construction completion in fiscal 2027.
- **Anchorage Waterproofing:** Remove failed existing membranes, inspect, repair, and enclose the anchorage to protect the cables from persistent damp conditions.
- **Inspection Access to the MacKay Bridge:** Implement Phase One of a plan to improve critical access to the underside of the MacKay Bridge. The initiative will enhance inspections and ensure efficient maintenance and repair efforts.
- **Weigh in Motion and Structural Health Monitoring:** Develop a comprehensive project charter and selection of an optimal system design. Associated civil works are slated for 2027-28 construction season.
- **Future of MacKay Bridge:** Conduct a strategic options analysis to guide provincial government decisions on long-term options for a viable transportation corridor across the Halifax Narrows.

User experience and community value

- **Macdonald Plaza:** Deliver a redesigned plaza featuring new automatic gates, variable traffic indicator signage, dedicated truck turnaround area, provisions for weigh-in-motion technology and designated space for flag displays.
- **Computer Managed Maintenance System:** Deploy an intuitive system to streamline work order management, asset tracking, inspection management, preventive maintenance scheduling and inventory control ensuring operational efficiency and regulatory compliance.
- **Traffic Management Control Centre:** Launch a centralized operations centre at the former MACPASS Customer Service Centre to enhance collaboration, reduce redundancy, streamline communications, and support more responsive operations. To ensure the centre can adapt to future needs and integrate with other systems supporting regional traffic management, HHB will continue working with internal and external partners to identify opportunities for alignment and shared efficiencies.
- **Variable Message Signage (VMS):** Replace HHB-owned VMS signs that are at the end of their life. Continue discussions on expanding signage and travel time messaging to other locations in the province.

Healthy workplace culture

- **Employee Survey:** After formally surveying the workforce, HHB will develop programs to respond to concerns and areas requiring more attention.
- **Safety Management System and Manual:** Complete a new Safety Management System and associated safety manual and promote it through small group sessions.
- **Recruitment:** Review recruitment strategies used locally and at other Canadian bridges and engineering focused organizations to design an HHB specific approach. Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan that reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve, along with department specific plans that address HHB's unique workforce needs.
- **Training for Managers:** Organize a year-long series of presentations and workshops for senior managers and supervisors to strengthen leadership skills and to foster a positive, progressive workforce.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	2025-2026 Estimate	2025-2026 Forecast	2026-2027 Estimate
Revenue			
Province of Nova Scotia Operating Grants	\$17,317,000	\$19,550,000	\$20,153,000
Investment and Other Income	1,065,000	1,917,000	501,000
Total Revenue	\$18,382,000	\$21,467,000	\$20,654,000
Expenses			
Corporate	\$1,685,000	\$2,669,000	\$3,833,000
Strategic Transportation Actions	632,000	2,269,000	1,531,000
Halifax Harbour Bridges Administration	4,014,000	3,973,000	4,120,000
Halifax Harbour Bridges Maintenance	4,860,000	4,454,000	5,062,000
Halifax Harbour Bridges Operations	7,191,000	5,770,000	5,891,000
Total Operating Expense	\$18,382,000	\$19,135,000	\$20,437,000
Surplus (Deficit) Before Other Items	\$0	\$2,332,000	\$217,000
Other Items			
Province of Nova Scotia Capital Grants	\$85,900,000	\$73,324,000	\$120,125,000
Less Capital Amortization	(14,529,000)	(13,259,000)	(14,529,000)
Less Accounting Adjustment (Writedown of Land)	0	(3,433,000)	0
Total Other Items	\$71,371,000	\$56,632,000	\$105,596,000
Surplus (Deficit) After Other Items	\$71,371,000	\$58,964,000	\$105,813,000