



**Department of
Works, Services and Transportation**

**Strategic Plan
2003 - 2006**

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Strategic Planning

Strategic planning involves making decisions that guide the organization from what it is to what it will become.

OUR VISION

We shall excel at fulfilling the economic and social requirements of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and our clients for public works and transportation infrastructure.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Department of Works, Services and Transportation, working in consultation with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, is to ensure a safe, efficient and sustainable transportation system, and to meet the needs of the public sector for accommodations, public building facilities and support services.

OUR VALUES

- ✓ We are committed to working together to create a work environment that fosters communication, team building, leadership and respect for both our staff and clients.
- ✓ We are committed to providing a quality service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- ✓ We shall be innovative to meet the challenges and demands placed upon the department.

LINES OF BUSINESS

Three lines of business have been identified for WST:

W

orks - Provision of facility/building planning and design services, construction and development management, facilities maintenance, accommodations and real property acquisition.

S

ervices - Providing clients with purchasing services, motor vehicle fleet management, water bomber and air ambulance services, air strip infrastructure, printing, telephone, web access and mail services.

T

ransportation - Provision and maintenance of the provincial highway system, provision of a marine passenger and freight service, port management, transportation policy and other related policies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department is responsible for:

- ▶ providing and maintaining a transportation system including summer and winter maintenance (snowclearing and ice control) on 8,937 kilometres of primary and secondary highways, community access roads, as well as maintaining eight (8) aircraft for air ambulance and water bomber services and managing 21 ferries (16 services) in marine operations;
- ▶ managing and maintaining approximately 575,300 square metres of floor space in 860 government-owned buildings and properties;
- ▶ constructing new buildings and other capital projects for government departments and government-funded bodies. This includes managing an approximate \$300 million cash flow in major capital projects over the past 3 to 4 years, with special emphasis on health and educational facilities;
- ▶ maintaining a fleet of 2,212 vehicles of which 865 are light vehicles, 695 are heavy equipment vehicles and 652 other utility vehicles (snowmobile, all terrain vehicles, etc.);
- ▶ providing space for government departments in government-owned buildings and leased accommodations;

Did you know...

Water bombers can pick up 5,346 litres of water in 10 seconds.



- ▶ providing central purchasing for all government departments;
- ▶ developing and maintaining a proactive intermodal transportation policy involving the federal government and neighbouring provinces;
- ▶ providing printing services for government including in-house and contracted services; and
- ▶ providing centralized mail and messenger services for government.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Related Government Priorities

Priority on People

- ✓ Maintaining priorities on health care and education
- ✓ Strategic Social Plan

Priorities on Infrastructure

- ✓ Roads and bridges
- ✓ Marine transportation
- ✓ Educational and health care facilities

Priorities on Labrador

- ✓ Trans-Labrador Highway
- ✓ Marine services to Labrador

Government Agendas

- ✓ Jobs and Growth Strategy
- ✓ Accountability Framework
- ✓ Budget and Throne speeches

Stakeholder Consultations

Consultations with internal and external stakeholders were held across the province. Internally, both management and unionized staff representing all levels, branches and regions provided input into the process. Externally, user groups and client departments were contacted to obtain their input.

“ WST affects the lives of every person in the province in some manner each and every day.”

Consultation participant

Considerable knowledge was gained at these stakeholder consultations and was key to detailing the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the department. Several themes and issues consistently emerged throughout the process. The main themes included:

- ▶ WST employees are the key strength of the department. While this strength is evident through a talented, knowledgeable and hard working group of employees, continued efforts by the department to promote a supportive environment and culture is essential to maintaining this strength.
- ▶ Over the past number of years, government has been faced with many financial constraints. Despite these challenges, the department has continued to provide quality service with limited resources. It is probable, however, that any further reductions in resources may require innovative approaches to ensure sustainable service levels.
- ▶ Fostering and supporting a well trained group of employees is key to maintaining an effective workplace. This is especially true for employees facing an increasingly complex work environment. Although the department offers significant training to its employees, much of this is focused on required regulatory training. An increased emphasis on training that promotes both leadership and development is required to maintain and strengthen our workforce.
- ▶ Greater internal communication is needed to provide staff with opportunities for input into decisions that impact upon their roles and responsibilities. WST must also strive to more fully inform the public and client departments of our responsibilities, limitations and the demands placed upon us.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

A. Resources

The Department of Works, Services and Transportation's key resource is its people. These dedicated, hard-working employees play an integral role in the daily lives of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are using our roads, bridges, ferries, and buildings.

For a number of years, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has focused on offering and managing programs in a more cost effective manner. For WST, this issue is critical. Within the current environment, the biggest challenge we face is meeting increasing service demands within budget allocations. Given the unpredictable nature of the demands placed on many of our mandated services (e.g. snow clearing), we must often balance public needs and desires with available resources.

At present, many of the department's assets are aging, placing greater pressure on funding due to increased repair and replacement costs.

Regardless of fiscal realities, the department is committed to providing the best possible service within allocated resources.

B. Communications and public perception

All internal consultations identified the need for improved communications. The department needs to educate the public on WST's mandate, capacity and restrictions. The department also recognizes the need for enhanced internal communications, transparency and increased employee involvement in the decision-making process.

Did you know...

The combined 'years of service' for all of WST's 2,325 employees is 27,200 years.

C. Demographics and other trends

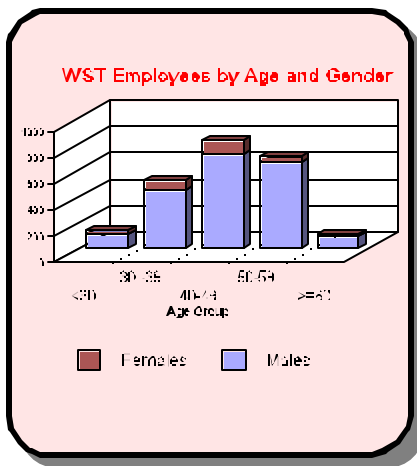
As with all government departments, WST operates in an environment undergoing significant demographic changes.

WST has the largest number of employees of all provincial government departments. As with the rest of North America, departmental “baby boomers” are quickly reaching retirement age. Many employees have been with the department for most of their careers. Consequently, there are many human resource issues such as the loss of corporate knowledge, recruitment and retention of staff, and succession planning.

The province is experiencing a declining population as a result of a low birth rate and continued out-migration, with young people leaving their home communities to further their education and/or seek employment. Increased urbanization and demographic shifts have serious implications for service delivery.

In recent years, the federal government has embarked on a major divestiture program to dispose of many of its facilities across the country. The divestiture of airports and ports creates opportunities and challenges for the province. Some direct benefits are received from divestiture such as immediate improvements to infrastructure. Divestiture, however, may impose additional demands upon already limited resources needed for ongoing operations and maintenance.

Legislation changes continue to affect how the department operates and manages its funding resources for a variety of issues such as environmental remediation and potentially, the effective use of road salt.



Did you know...

In the year 2001/02 WST's intra-provincial ferry service transported over 744,000 passengers and 353,000 vehicles.



MV Flanders

The 36-car, ice-strengthened MV Flanders, which was built at the Marystown Shipyard in 1990 at a cost of \$13.6 M, operates year round on the Bell Island Service.



MV Gallipoli

The 18 kilometre crossing between Burgeo and Ramea has been plied by the 47 metre MV Gallipoli since its construction in 1986. This vessel was also built at the Marystown Shipyard.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Four strategic priorities have emerged as a result of the strategic planning process. These provide focus and are viewed as being paramount to achieving WST's vision and delivering on its mission. They encompass the operations and activities of the entire department and are as follows:

1. **Sound Human Resource Management**
2. **Adequacy of Service Delivery**
3. **Appropriate Stewardship of Public Infrastructure**
4. **Effective Internal and External Communications**

Strength in Our People

People are our key resource and the department's first strategic priority. To maintain this strength, the talent, knowledge and dedication of our employees must be fostered in a supportive culture.

The department is committed to creating an environment where employees can achieve their personal and professional potential for the overall benefit of the people they serve.

Strategic Priority #1: Sound Human Resource Management

The Department of Works, Services and Transportation delivers essential services that are critical to the people of the province. As the largest department in government, there are over 2300 permanent, temporary and seasonal employees. The talents and knowledge of each and every employee are brought together to effectively deal with the challenges placed upon the department.

Recognizing that our key strength lies within our employees, the department has developed a strategic human resource plan that will identify key issues in retention and recruitment of staff, training and development, as well as issues surrounding retirements.

Goal 1.1 Develop and implement a human resource strategy that supports a team of employees with the professional, business, technical and operational skills necessary to deliver WST's mission.

Strategic Objectives:

- 1.1.1 Utilizing a high level of understanding of the training requirements of WST employees, deliver relevant and effective training and development programs.
- 1.1.2 Provide a focus in training programs that addresses competencies and succession planning.

Goal 1.2 Use best practices, reflective of leadership in human resource management, to carry out recruitment, employee development, retention and career planning.

Strategic Objectives:

- 1.2.1 Develop an effective recruitment program that will ensure the supply of competent and qualified human resources to deliver WST's mandate.
- 1.2.2 Promote a workplace that recognizes the contribution of the department's human resources and that will encourage retention in a challenging environment.
- 1.2.3 Develop a career planning program that will encourage and stimulate internal employee mobility and job satisfactions.
- 1.2.4 Develop respectful workplace values, equitable policies and proactive internal management techniques for our human resources.

Goal 1.3 Foster an environment that includes a participative approach to employer/employee relations.

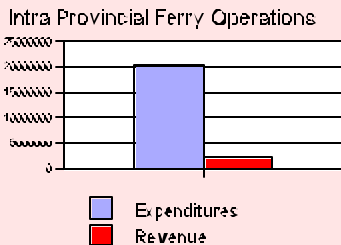
Strategic Objectives:

- 1.3.1 Promote effective two-way communications with employee and management groups.
- 1.3.2 Encourage employee feedback on employer methodologies affecting employee workplace issues.

Strategic Priority #2: *Adequacy of Service Delivery*

Did you know...

For WST's intra-provincial ferry service, related revenue only covers approximately 10% of the service's operational expenditures.



Improvements to infrastructure and services will be aggressively pursued; however, the most appropriate level of service delivery must be determined within the context of the current operating environment, particularly fiscal and demographic changes.

Ensuring adequate services are provided is the mandate of the department. Responding to need at a time of reduced resources and escalating costs is the challenge. Careful attention must be paid to the level of service provided in light of demographic shifts within the province, changes in jurisdictional responsibilities, reductions in federal funding and increased public lobbying.

Goal 2.1 Plan and deliver transportation and building infrastructure programs.

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.1.1 Develop a capital program with consideration given to financial analysis and assessment of need.
- 2.1.2 Deliver service levels for users that support sufficiency, efficiency, reliability and safety in all program areas and especially snow and ice control on roads, ferry operations and building management.
- 2.1.3 Provide effective and efficient preventive maintenance to extend asset life and to reduce need for major capital repairs.
- 2.1.4 Provide an integrated inter-modal transportation network, with emphasis on the completion of Trans-Labrador Highway.
- 2.1.5 Develop a strategy to optimize the provision of marine services in response to public need.

Did you know...

WST maintains 23 airstrips throughout the province, 13 of which are on the coast of Labrador



Air Ambulance
- King Air 350

Goal 2.2 Continued emphasis on policy and planning efforts.

Strategic Objectives:

- 2.2.1 Adjust to changes in national guidelines and best practices in transportation, property management and construction.
- 2.2.2 Influence national transportation policies to the benefit of the province.
- 2.2.3 Continue to develop policy and procedures for the safety and security of all infrastructure users.

Goal 2.3 Ensure a quality service that supports a range of government activities.

Strategic Objective:

- 2.3.1 Develop client service agreements for client departments based on their demand for service.

Did you know...

- ▶ WST's mailroom handles over 5 million internal and 5 million external pieces of mail annually.
- ▶ WST's Government Purchasing Agency (GPA) issues approximately 8,000 goods and/or services contracts totalling approximately \$100,000,000 annually.

Strategic Priority #3: Appropriate Stewardship of Public Infrastructure

WST is responsible for a large and varied public infrastructure - roads, buildings, ferries, airplanes and highway vehicles/equipment. Proper stewardship of these assets, including appropriate use and maintenance, is essential to ensure the greatest public value possible is derived from this substantial economic investment.

Maintaining and utilizing our infrastructure in the most efficient and effective manner possible is a duty we hold on behalf of taxpayers. In most cases, this means maximizing use, while in others it may result in the disposal of surplus assets. Furthermore, with diminished budgets, it is critical we use the modern technology and new tools available for optimizing preventive maintenance programs to sustain the usefulness of this infrastructure. Special emphasis is required to regularly refit ferry vessels and to maintain port infrastructure.

Goal 3.1 Undertake preventive maintenance and repair / support activities directed towards achieving the maximum useful life of government assets.

Strategic Objectives:

- 3.1.1 Optimize the use of available funding by focusing on critical maintenance requirements.
- 3.1.2 Renew a business plan to illustrate the benefits of a preventive maintenance program for all public infrastructure.
- 3.1.3 Apply environmentally sensitive practices to all activities.

Goal 3.2 Develop and implement effective replacement / disposal strategies for applicable infrastructure.

Strategic Objectives:

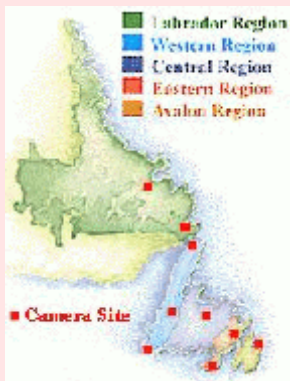
- 3.2.1 Review and refine criteria to determine when assets should be acquired/disposed.
- 3.2.2 Dispose of surplus government buildings and lands.
- 3.2.3 Continue to implement a planned approach to vessel replacement using innovative approaches where appropriate.

Getting the word out...

The departmental newsletter, **NEWSCAST**, is produced quarterly and features interesting articles about the department written by WST employees. Featured articles include employee profiles, departmental activities and social events.

WST's web site contains valuable and interesting information about WST and the services we provide to the public. The web site contains departmental news releases, ferryschedules, road construction information, 'live' highway cameras as well as links to various divisions of the department.

WST's web site:
www.gov.nl.ca/wst/



Strategic Priority #4: Effective internal and external communications

WST is an operationally-based department and delivers many essential services to the public. A strong communications strategy is needed -- both internally and externally-- to:

- ! promote and facilitate public safety and convenience;
- ! enhance workflow;
- ! foster a corporate identity that informs users of the department's responsibilities and services; and
- ! provide an efficient and effective service.

Goal 4.1 Promote awareness of the department's services to external audiences.

Strategic Objectives:

- 4.1.1 Seek opportunities to explain and educate the public and clients on WST's role, policies and services through a proactive public awareness program.

Goal 4.2 Improve internal communications.

Strategic Objectives:

- 4.2.1 Improve flow of information between appropriate work groups to foster involvement in policy and decision making processes.
- 4.2.2 Celebrate the successes of our employees and our department.