



2025–2028

Strategic Plan



Local Governance
Commission
OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Message From the Chair

I am pleased to present the Local Governance Commission of New Brunswick's first strategic plan, which will guide our efforts for the period of April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2028.

The Commission is an independent body dedicated to improving local governance through expert information as well as impartial and timely rulings and recommendations. Transparency and integrity are therefore at the heart of our work, and this strategic plan reflects our commitment to these ideals, and to the other values set out within this document. And while there is no legal requirement for the Commission to have such a document, I feel strongly that creating and sharing our strategic priorities for the next few years – a time during which the Commission's decisions and recommendations will form a roadmap for local officials and staff across the province – is a key part of our commitment to being a trusted and valued resource in addressing challenges in local governance in New Brunswick.

As Chair of the Local Governance Commission, I am proud of this strategic plan. It will be a central guide for commission members and staff while providing the public with a clear understanding of our mission, our vision for the future and the steps needed to take us there.

Sincerely,

Giselle Goguen, B.A., LL.B
Chair, Local Governance Commission of New Brunswick

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The Commission

Please note that the Local Governance Commission of New Brunswick (the Commission) is made up of an operational arm and a governance arm. "Commission" means the entity of the Local Governance Commission established under the *Local Governance Commission Act*. Whereas, "commission" means the governance arm of the Commission, being the collective group of the Chair, Vice Chair and three (3) members, that makes decisions in relation to imposing sanctions on municipal elected officials relating to alleged code of conduct violations and municipal elected officials and senior staff relating to conflict of interest violations, and makes recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on matters as required by the Act.

Commission Overview

The Local Governance Commission of New Brunswick (the Commission) was created as part of local governance reform. The Commission was brought into legal effect on May 15, 2024, with the proclamation of the *Local Governance Commission Act*. Pursuant to the *Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act*, the Commission is a Category 2 Crown body, which requires the Commission to prepare an annual report addressing information relating to the Commission's activities during each fiscal year. This strategic plan will be helpful in informing annual reports over the next three (3) years.

Mandate and Role

Section 4 of the *Local Governance Commission Act* sets out the mandate of the Commission:

- ◆ Providing support and assistance to local governments and regional service commissions;
- ◆ Providing advice and recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on any matter related to local governments, regional service commissions and rural districts;
- ◆ Investigating matters within the Commission's jurisdiction;

- ◆ Providing education, advice and information on matters under the *Local Governance Commission Act* or any other related Act; and
- ◆ Performing any functions assigned to it by the Minister Local Government.

The Role of the Commission:

- ◆ Investigating, ruling on, and imposing sanctions relating to alleged code of conduct and conflict of interest violations;
- ◆ Reviewing and making recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on restructuring requests, such as incorporations of new local governments, amalgamations, annexations, and decreases in the territorial limits;
- ◆ Reviewing and making recommendations to the Minister of Local Government in response to requests to alter boundaries of a regional service commission;
- ◆ Reviewing and making recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on regional service commission decisions relating to cost sharing for sport, recreation and cultural regional infrastructure;
- ◆ Studying and making recommendations to the Minister of Local Government on whether to amend or repeal certain local government by-laws;
- ◆ Appointing supervisors for local governments whose councils no longer have quorum;
- ◆ Recommending to Cabinet the appointment of supervisors for local governments, in certain specific situations;
- ◆ Recommending to the Minister of Local Government the appointment of trustees for regional service commissions;
- ◆ Appointing inspectors to carry out investigations of local governments, local boards, and regional service commissions;
- ◆ Appointing auditors to carry out audits of local governments, local boards, and regional service commissions; and
- ◆ Examining any other topic requested by the Minister or Cabinet.

For more information on the Commission, please visit us at:

<https://www.lgcnb-cglnb.ca/>.

Staff and Budget

The Commission has five (5) permanent full-time positions: a full-time Chair, a Director/General Counsel, two (2) senior advisors and an administrative assistant. All the Commission's staff, including the Chair, are located in Fredericton, as mandated by section 11 of the *Local Governance Commission Act*.

The Commission also has a Vice-Chair and three (3) commission members, who are not employed on a full-time basis, but rather are expected to attend regularly scheduled Commission meetings to decide on cases and conduct other Commission business.

The Chair of the Commission is Giselle Goguen, B.A. LL.B; the Vice-Chair is Jacques Dubé; and the remaining commission members are:

- ◆ Troy Stone, CPA,
- ◆ Donna Redmond-Gates, and
- ◆ John Nugent, K.C.

The Commission's gross expenditure budget for 2025–2026 is \$802,812.

Vision

The Commission is dedicated to improving local governance through expert guidance and support. We aim to be a trusted and valued resource in addressing challenges in local governance in New Brunswick.

Mission

The Commission is an expert and independent source of information related to the *Local Governance Commission Act* and other related legislation, recommendations and rulings pertaining to local governance in New Brunswick.

Core Values

Our values guide everything we do, shaping our decisions, interactions, and commitment to excellence.

- ◆ **Independence** – we remain objective, impartial, and grounded in evidence;
- ◆ **Integrity** – we will act professionally, treating everyone with fairness, honesty and respect;
- ◆ **Transparency** – we communicate our decisions clearly and publicly, explaining the reasoning behind them;
- ◆ **Timeliness** – we work efficiently and respond promptly, recognizing the impact of our work on the public; and
- ◆ **Collaboration** – we value diverse perspectives and work as a cohesive team.

Strategic Priorities

PILLAR I:

Establishing and Implementing an Education Strategy

One of the Objectives and Purposes of the Commission, as set out in section 4 of the *Local Governance Commission Act*, is to provide education related to the Act. The Department of Local Government remains responsible for training and education on other legislation, such as the *Local Governance Act* and the *Regional Service Delivery Act*.

To date, the Commission has developed and launched a website (<https://www.lgcnb-cglnb.ca/>), which provides comprehensive information on the Commission's Structure, Mandate, Role, and Resources. The website includes process maps for most areas of responsibility, providing people with a clear explanation of how the Commission works. In addition, the Chair has made presentations to all three local government associations in the province, and the Director/General Counsel has met with other interested organizations to provide information on the Commission's role and mandate, and she has conducted training for the staff at the Department of Local Government. In addition, the Commission's annual report, the first of which will be tabled in the Legislature in September 2025, performs an education function.

Currently, presentations are provided upon request. However, the Commission would like to take a more proactive approach, especially given there are ongoing discussions in the local government sector surrounding the need for more training and education opportunities for local governments, regional services commissions, and others.

It is a priority of the Commission to establish and implement a comprehensive education strategy over the next three (3) years. To this end, the Commission will engage with the three (3) municipal associations and the Department of Local Government to identify opportunities for training and education initiatives. The Commission will also work with the associations and the Department to gauge local interest in training and education opportunities. Any voluntary or mandatory training related to the

Commission's mandate, such as code of conduct and conflict of interest matters, should be provided directly by the Commission.

In addition, the Commission will establish an annual schedule for providing education on the Commission's full mandate to interested groups of local governments and rural districts, on a regional basis, and regional service commissions.

Goal:

By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have developed and implemented a comprehensive education strategy across the province.

Overall Indicators:

- ◆ Implemented an annual education opportunities schedule for local governments, rural districts, and regional service commissions.
- ◆ Contacted the Department of Local Government and discussed identifying education and training opportunities related to the Commission's mandate.
- ◆ Collaborated with the three (3) municipal associations to provide annual updates and continuing education to their membership on the Commission's mandate and role.
- ◆ Monitor and report annually on the percentage of elected and appointed officials who have taken code of conduct and conflict of interest training and attended education sessions on the role of the Commission.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2026, both prior to and following the 2026 general municipal elections, the Commission will have an education schedule in place for interested local governments, rural districts, and regional service commissions that have expressed a desire for such training.

Indicators:

- ◆ The Commission will have identified an employee to coordinate the implementation of an annual education plan.
- ◆ The Commission will have scheduled bi-annual education opportunities,

both virtual and in-person, for local governments, rural districts, and regional service commissions.

- ◆ The Commission will have developed presentations and other materials on the Commission's mandate and role.
- ◆ The Commission will have provided training on topics within its mandate such as conflict of interest and code of conduct matters within any pre- or post-general election training or education provided by the Department of Local Government and the three (3) municipal associations.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2027, the Commission will have fully implemented an annual education session schedule for interested local governments, rural districts, and regional service commissions, with both virtual and in-person offerings in both the fall and spring of each year.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have conducted an evaluation of its annual education offerings, with a view to making necessary improvements. The evaluation will look at things, such as the percentage of elected and appointed officials who have attended training and education sessions offered by the Commission, the results of surveys provided to attendees at the conclusion of each session offered by the Commission, etc.

PILLAR II:

Establishing Service Standards

Following the establishment of the Commission on May 15, 2024, the Commission established the necessary policies and procedures to implement the Commission's legislative mandate. The Commission also developed process maps to assist people in understanding and accessing the Commission's services and procedures (<https://www.lgcnb-cglnb.ca/en/resources/>).

To ensure that the Commission is providing the highest possible level of service, it is important to continuously monitor, evaluate and, when needed, improve our programs and services. To that end, the Commission will be establishing service standards for the most frequently provided services.

Service standards are public commitments to measurable levels of service that people can reasonably expect from a public body. In order to establish service standards, the Commission must first continuously monitor the efficacy and efficiency of all of our programs and services, and must collect data to establish timelines, benchmarks and baselines. To accomplish this, the Commission requires a full staff complement. At this time, the Commission only has one of two (2) senior advisor positions staffed.

Once the Commission has sufficient data to establish service standards, they will be made publicly available on the Commission's website <https://www.lgcnb-cglnb.ca/>. This ensures transparency and accountability.

Goal:

By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have established service standards for the Commission's programs and services.

Overall Indicators:

- ◆ The Commission will have collected and analysed data on the time it takes to complete files (start to finish) for services provided under the Commission's mandate.
- ◆ The Commission will have established benchmarks for each service.
- ◆ The Commission will have established service standards and made them publicly available.

Objective 1:

- ◆ By March 31, 2026, the Commission will have collected and analysed data on the time it takes to complete files (start to finish) for services provided under the Commission's mandate.

Objective 2:

- ◆ By March 31, 2027, the Commission will have established benchmarks for each service.

Objective 3:

- ◆ By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have established service standards and made them publicly available.

PILLAR III:

Governance

The Commission was established on May 15, 2024. The Commission consists of an operational arm and governance body made up of the commission members. The commission members render decisions, make recommendations and act as an administrative tribunal. There are five (5) commission members, including the Chair.

Following the establishment of the Commission, the commission members adopted several governance policies covering a wide array of matters including conflicts of interest. The commission members adopted a Board Charter, a Code of Conduct and evaluation policies to guide annual performance reviews and ongoing improvement.

The commission members also adopted a Commission Evaluation Policy that requires commission members to annually evaluate their own performance, effectiveness, leadership, and governance practices. An associated annual Commission Evaluation Tool will be launched in 2026. The intention is to evaluate the commission members' overall effectiveness in fulfilling the Commission's legislative mandate, adhering to governance best practices, and responding to emerging governance considerations.

Goal:

By March 31, 2028, the Commission will continue to/always foster a governance culture of continuous improvement through the consistent application and review of its governance policies, implementation of its annual Commission Evaluation Tool and through reviewing and incorporating necessary changes in decision-making following the judicial review of Commission decisions.

Overall Indicators:

- ◆ The Commission will have annually reviewed all its governance policies and incorporated any necessary updates.
- ◆ The Commission will have implemented the annual Commission Evaluation Tool.
- ◆ The Commission will have reviewed any judicial review decisions related to its own decisions and incorporated any necessary changes to its decision-making process.

Objective 1:

- ◆ By March 31, 2026, the Commission will have implemented the annual Commission Evaluation Tool.

Objective 2:

- ◆ By March 31, 2027, the Commission will have reviewed all its governance policies twice on an annual basis and incorporated any necessary updates annually.

Objective 3:

- ◆ By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have reviewed any judicial review decisions related to its own decisions and incorporated any necessary changes to its decision-making process.

PILLAR IV:

People

The Commission has a small team of dedicated subject matter experts and administrative support. As such, it is vital to maintain a positive workplace culture that encourages and supports employees to complete training and education opportunities to benefit the Commission's work while fostering their professional development. To this end, the Commission will engage professionals from different sectors to provide training opportunities for staff, support staff in attending relevant conferences such as the

Governance Professionals of Canada's annual conference and comply with the requirements for continuing education mandated by relevant professional bodies, such as the Law Society of New Brunswick.

In providing ongoing training and education opportunities to staff, the Commission ensures they are up to date on relevant subject matter areas. These efforts will ensure that staff are actively contributing to the overall success of the Commission through transparent, flexible, and meaningful work.

Goal:

By March 31, 2028, Commission staff will have received training in investigative techniques and alternative dispute resolution skills. Staff will have also been offered the opportunity to attend various conferences that cover topics central to the Commission's work. Through these endeavours, staff will also feel supported and empowered in carrying out their day-to-day work.

Overall Indicators:

- ◆ The Commission will have enabled and supported career growth and development aligned with organizational objectives through training and continuing education opportunities.
- ◆ The Commission will have fostered a work culture of transparency, flexibility, and meaningful work.
- ◆ The Commission will empower staff with the skills, support, and resources to necessary to complete their work.

Objective 1:

- ◆ By March 31, 2026, the Commission will have provided investigation and mediation training to the two senior advisors.

Objective 2:

- ◆ By March 31, 2027, the Commission will have provided opportunities for staff to attend professional development courses and conferences.

Objective 3:

- ◆ By March 31, 2028, the Commission will have completed a review with staff to identify any gaps and determine appropriate/necessary future training and education opportunities to address the same.



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