

A faint, light-colored map of Nova Scotia is visible in the background of the slide. The map shows the outline of the province, including its major islands and the Bay of Fundy.

Towns Task Force Implementation:

Update to UNSM Membership

November 6, 2013

Purpose



- *To make recommendations to the Province and UNSM to address the many challenges facing Nova Scotia towns.*

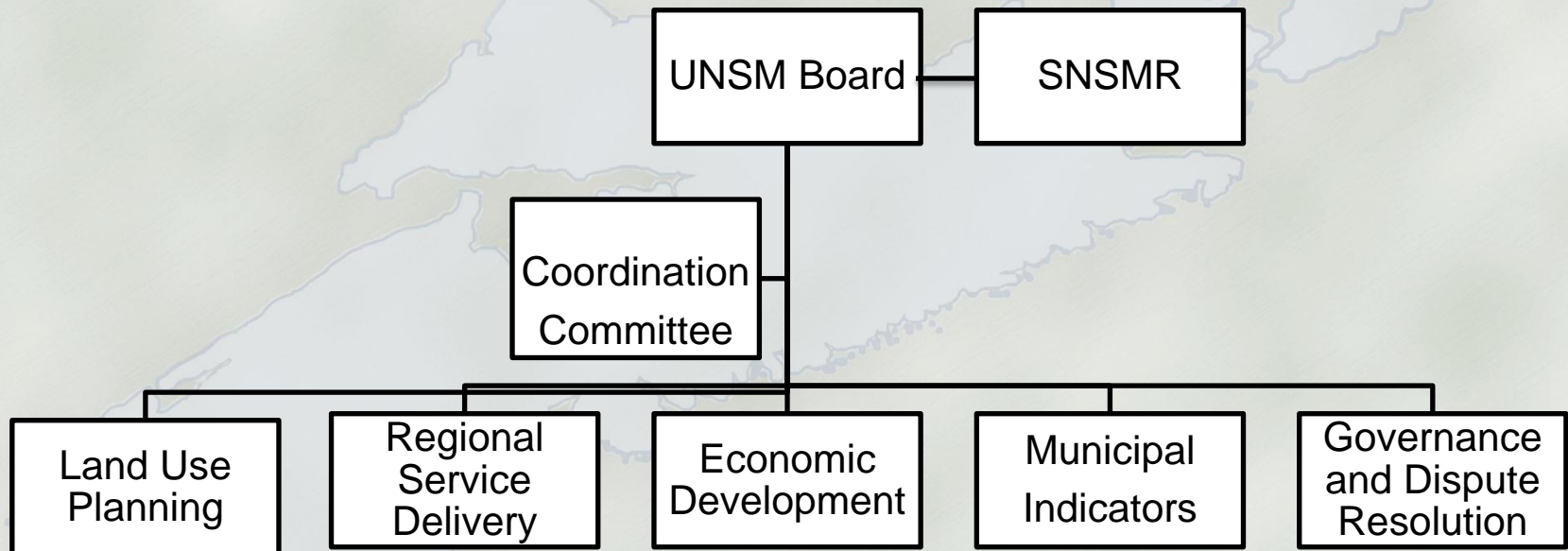
Guiding Principle

- **Best value and fairness for tax payers regardless of structure**

Towns Task Force Themes

1. Municipalities must be viable in the long term
2. Governance changes may be necessary to achieve viability, and legislation and programs should support this
3. Create less confrontational ways to resolve service issues between municipalities, resulting in more efficient municipalities
4. Make the tax burden on citizens for regional services, fair
5. Enhance the support for and use of regional service delivery models
6. Provide new tools and incentives to increase economic growth in downtowns

Towns Task Force Structure



Municipal Indicators



- Oversee annual publication of the revised municipal indicators and financial condition index
- Research and publish information on questions to ask and potential actions for municipalities who wish to pursue improvements that will ameliorate poor indicator scores.

Economic Development

Promoting Downtown Development:

- November 13 workshop organized with the ED's of BIDC's, downtown associations, and WDC's to gather input on how to make downtowns, mainstreets, and waterfronts key destination areas.
 - Will involve looking at roles of municipal and provincial governments to make this happen.
- Lower commercial tax rates in downtowns
- Phased in commercial taxes to occupy vacant buildings

Land-Use Planning



Downtown Relocation Policy:

- Development of provincial policy to assess the social and economic impacts of relocating provincial offices from outside of downtowns.
- Policy would require consultation with the impacted municipalities.

Economic Development

Brownfield Development:

- Tax break/deferral options for property developers willing to develop brownfield sites
- Proposed Provincial grant program to offset remediation costs – enhance FCM GMF Program
- Hire Brownfield Coordinator to work with UNSM/municipalities

Land-Use Planning

Encourage more holistic regional planning between adjacent units:

- Looking at ways to encourage adjacent municipalities to jointly plan, particularly on town borders - *through MGA amendments*
- Both units would agree on a Regional Planning Area taking into consideration such factors as watersheds, traffic/commuter patterns, location of piped services, current development patterns and any other factors they consider relevant.
 - Disputes resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution

Land-Use Planning



Building Code Review:

- Committee met with senior provincial officials from Communities, Culture and Heritage and Labour and Advanced Education
 - Act has been updated; need more public education on what Building Code allows— particularly as it relates to heritage properties and heritage districts

Land-Use Planning



Joint Development Zones:

- Develop justification wording and key principles to be included in an MGA amendment for the creation of Joint Development Zones between two municipalities, even if they are not geographically connected
 - Will include inter-municipal agreement template

Regional Service Delivery



Tasks:

- Establish mechanism whereby a developer can pay for costs in an adjacent municipality for extension of services through infrastructure charges with the agreement of the municipalities.
- Amend MGA to permit an existing development requiring infrastructure, such as sewer services, from an adjacent municipality to recover costs through an area rate levied by the adjacent municipality on the development

Regional Service Delivery

Already addressed in MGA:

- 75(2) gives councils authority to impose area rates
- 274(1) gives municipalities authority to impose infrastructure charges through subdivision by-laws
- 60(1) gives municipalities authority to “agree with one or more municipalities ... to provide or administer municipal services.”
- 60(2)(b) provides that such an agreement may include the provision of services within or outside the municipality
- 60(3)(d) provides that it may include how the cost of the services, both capital and current, is to be paid

Regional Service Delivery

Types of Services that can be shared Regionally:

- Committee has prepared a list of potential services that can be shared regionally. Services broken down by colour - green (highest probability of success), yellow (potential for success but less frequently used), and red (lowest probability of success)

Regional Service Delivery

Encourage Municipal Cooperation through Provincial Programs:

- SNSMR's Director of Grants and Programs to develop formal policy with their grants and programs to encourage shared services where appropriate. (*This process is encouraged but no formal policy at present*)

Regional Service Delivery

Regional Service Cost-sharing Template:

- SNSMR completing workflow chart and cost-sharing template that includes various alternative cost sharing formulas

Regional Service Delivery

Non-SNSMR Provincial Programs:

- A template of various provincial programs (excluding those from SNSMR) has been developed that could be included in a shared service model.

Governance & Dispute Resolution



- Initial meeting held October 31
- Composition:
 - 3 from SNSMR
 - 6 from UNSM - two from each caucus
 - 2 from AMA
 - UNSM ED and Policy Analyst
 - up to 2 external members knowledgeable about dispute resolution and/or local governance models

Governance & Dispute Resolution

Tasks (Conflict Resolution)

- Less confrontational approaches to resolve service issues
- Develop a municipal mediation and arbitration program
- Develop a model dispute resolution clause for inclusion in joint municipal agreements

Governance & Dispute Resolution

Tasks (Governance):

- Explore alternatives to UARB in resolving disputes between municipal units
- Amend MGA to appoint a Commissioner for cases where municipalities agree a governance change is appropriate, and for where not all parties agree a governance change is appropriate
- Make it easier for a town to revert to a village
- Examine alternative governance forms for local government in other jurisdictions

Next Steps

- Sub-Committees continue to address recommendations in Task Force Report
- Meet with Coordinating Committee to receive input/approval on work thus far
- Seek approval from UNSM Board and SNSMR for ongoing sub-committee recommendations
- Work towards implementing recommendations including MGA changes
- Produce final report

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Questions???