

A Clear Path Forward: Municipal and Community Affairs' Strategic Plan

Mr. Speaker, later today, I will table "*A Clear Path Forward*", the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' Strategic Plan for 2010 to 2015. This Strategic Plan was developed through an inclusive process involving staff, partners and stakeholders. It is in sync with the 16th Legislative Assembly's priorities and embraces the goal of "Healthy Sustainable Communities".

MACA has a broad mandate involving a variety of stakeholders. The Department aims to provide relevant, effective programs and services reflecting innovation, learning and excellence.

Given the many changes of the past three years, it was time to review the achievements and milestones MACA has reached in collaboration with community governments, their representative organizations, sport organizations, and other partners. "*A Clear Path Forward*" identifies current and emerging issues and positions the Department to continue the positive momentum into the future.

The Strategic Plan highlights four key themes that will guide the work of the Department in implementing its diverse mandate over the next five years.

The first theme, "*A Foundation for Leadership*", recognizes that competent and effective elected leaders are necessary for community governments to function. Financial policies, programs, and partnerships encompassing sound financial management need to be in place to support community governments in making solid decisions on their way to a sustainable and vibrant future.

The second theme, *“Moving Forward”*, recognizes that MACA needs to ensure it has the tools and resources to support community governments effectively. These tools include:

- up-to-date comprehensive legislation and policies;
- meaningful communications tools for connecting with clients;
- strong partnerships; and
- a skilled workforce that proactively supports community governments.

The third theme, *“Stronger Safer Communities”*, speaks to MACA’s role in supporting community governments to address infrastructure planning, land management, and public safety. Fire protection, emergency management, clean drinking water, environmental planning and stewardship, are all part of this theme with the ultimate goal to create stronger, safer communities.

“Invest in People, Build Communities” encompasses capacity building as a fourth theme. It speaks to the need to improve community government public service by building the skills of community government staff. The Department knows that healthy, active people contribute to the quality of life in our communities. Culturally relevant physical activity programs are supported to promote healthy lifestyles and positive choices. MACA continues to support the development of an active volunteer sector that in turn contributes to community well-being.

These four broad themes reflect the Department’s high-level, strategic directions over the next five years. Supporting actions and strategies will roll out to balance needs with available resources. Many of the items in the Strategic Plan are long-term in nature, and the Department’s intent is to report on progress of achievements annually.

Mr. Speaker, community governments and MACA’s other partners are facing a range of challenges and opportunities. The Department is striving to maintain and improve meaningful partnerships with community governments to meet shared goals and

celebrate important milestones. I look forward to providing regular updates to Members on the activities undertaken to implement MACA's strategic plan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.