



“STRATEGY is a plan
in a **STREAM**
of decisions.”

- Henry Minyzberg



Municipal Assessment
Agency Inc.

BUSINESS
PLAN
2017-2020



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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present the Municipal Assessment Agency 2017-20 Business Plan. This plan has been prepared in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act and the Guidelines for Multi-Year Performance-Based Planning for Category 2 government entities. The Board of Directors acknowledges that it is accountable as a whole for the preparation of this plan and for achieving the goals and objectives outlined herein.

As a means to be compliant and committed to the importance of public accountability on the part of the Municipal Assessment Agency, we have sharpened our focus and reviewed our goals and strategic priorities going forward.

This business plan (April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2020) identifies our priorities, goals, and objectives over the next three years, and outlines the actions, measures, and incremental steps to achieve our goal. It has been developed with consideration of the strategic directions of Government.

The work of the Agency is demanding and complex, and our stakeholder base is extensive. How we communicate with these people, the mediums we use, the frequency and consistency of our message, and the overall level of awareness of the work we do is of extreme importance to us and to the clients we serve.

As Chair of the Board of the Municipal Assessment Agency I am proud to be associated with this work, and I am committed to working with my colleagues and various other individuals and groups to see this plan to fruition. It is a pleasure to work with so many talented and committed individuals, and I look forward to the important work we will do together over the next three years.



Dean Ball, Chair
Municipal Assessment Agency

1.0 AGENCY'S MANDATE

Mandate – is defined as what you are required to do by legislation or what you are otherwise commissioned to do. Mandate is the most basic requirement of any organization.

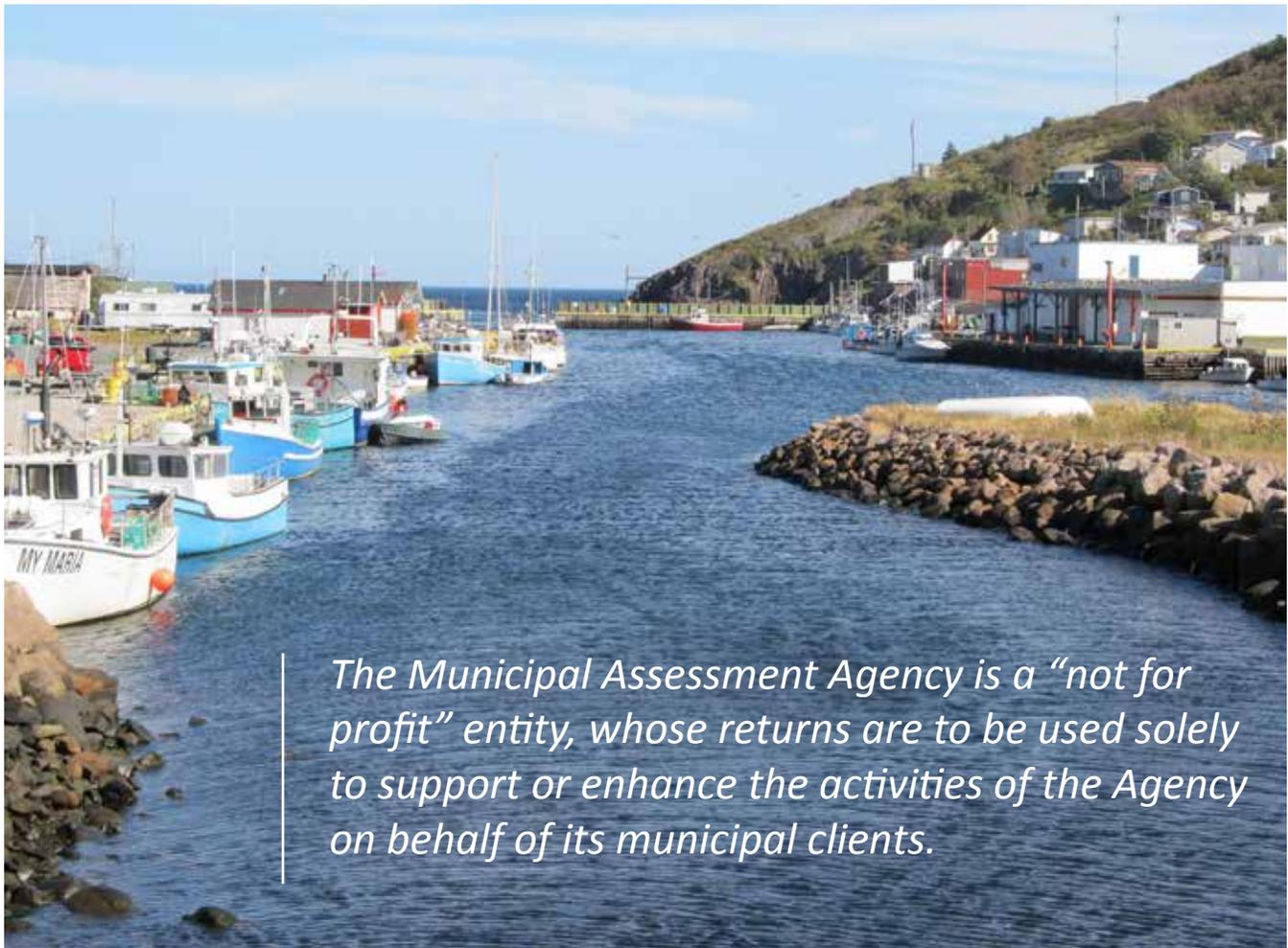
MANDATE:

The Municipal Assessment Agency is required to provide municipalities with real property values (or assessments) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the province's Assessment Act, 2006.

The Municipal Assessment Agency is limited by the conditions of its incorporation to do only the following:

- provide assessment activities per the Assessment Act 2006;
- provide and sell;
 - data and other related assessment information
 - property inspections
 - valuation services to all levels of the Crown, including municipalities as outlined in the Assessment Act 2006
- consultation and taxation services.

The Municipal Assessment Agency is a “not for profit” entity, whose returns are to be used solely to support or enhance the activities of the Agency on behalf of its municipal clients.



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2.0 VISION

An organization's vision is an articulation of what the organization is striving towards; what it hopes to achieve; how it would like to be seen by others.

VISION:

Clear. Concise. Outcomes based. This vision statement captures the essence of what the Agency strives for on a daily basis in its interactions with its many different stakeholders.

“The vision of the Municipal Assessment Agency is an organization applying the highest standards of fairness and equity in all operations and processes, thereby meeting the valuation needs and professional expectations of our clients.”



3.0 VALUES

The core values of the Municipal Assessment Agency are the principles upon which the Agency operates and are at the core of every decision the Board of Directors makes. The Agency's values were carefully reviewed and shared with the senior management team as part of its business plan update.

Accuracy and Reliability – the Agency places incredible importance on the validity of its data and the property values we provide.

Uniformity – above all else, the same consistent and rigorous process is applied in determining each and every property value.

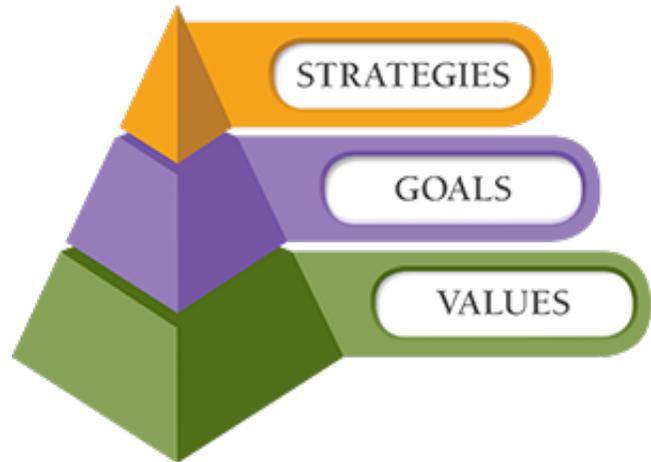
Effectiveness – the MAA strives for more than efficiency, the Board seeks to uphold the highest standards of best practice and be a results driven organization.

Honesty and Transparency – it is important that the work of the Agency be completely open and defensible and able to withstand the highest standards of scrutiny.

Vision and Innovation – the Municipal Assessment Agency is committed to seeking out the very best in assessment practices, and is open to new and exciting ideas and approaches in carrying out its work.

Respectfulness – as an organization that interacts with stakeholders on a daily basis, we are committed to ensuring we are always respectful of people, the valuation process, and opposing points of view.

Collaboration – we are committed to working together, forging strong partnerships, and building a strong team of dedicated and knowledgeable professionals.





“ Don't go for **SMALL COMMITMENTS**
on **BIG THINGS**

| go for **BIG COMMITMENTS**
on **SMALL THINGS**

”

4.0 OVERVIEW

LINES OF BUSINESS

The primary focus of the Municipal Assessment Agency is to provide accurate values on real property (land, buildings, and other properties) that form the basis of a municipality's assessed values that can be used for taxation purposes.

A small portion of the Agency's business is derived from the sale of assessments and assessment-related information, primarily through electronic means and in accordance with the limitation set by law.

STAFFING ALLOCATION

Currently, the Agency has a professional staff of approximately 56 (33 male and 23 female) dedicated employees.

REGIONAL OFFICES

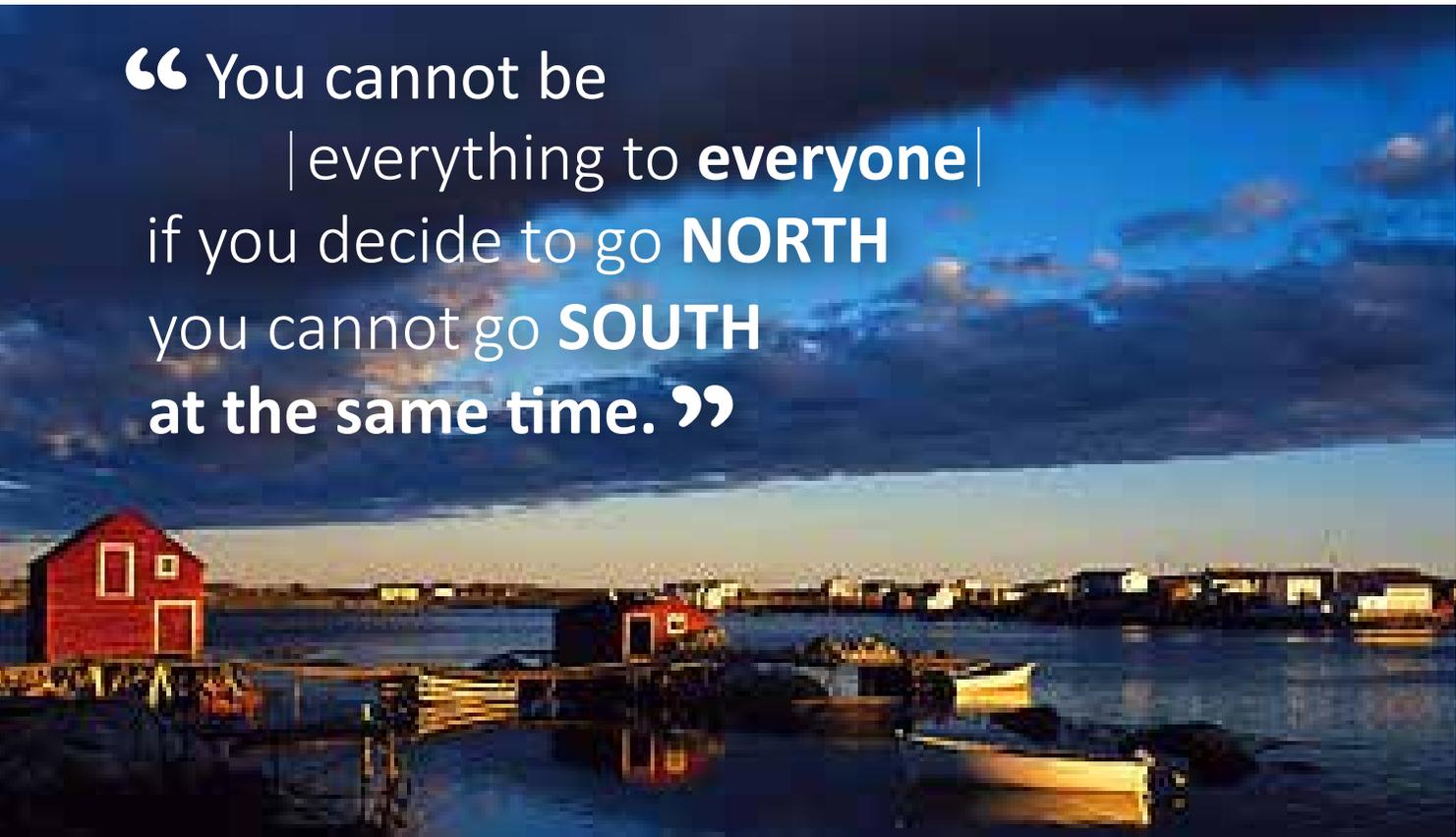
There are three (3) regional offices located in St. John's, Gander, and Corner Brook, and these three offices coordinate efforts for data collection, residential, and commercial assessments for all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

FIELD OFFICES

In addition to the Agency's three regional offices, there are field offices located throughout various regions of the island and into Labrador. In total, there are eight (8) field offices located in:

- Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Conception Bay South
- Carbonear
- Marystown
- Clarenville
- Grand Falls-Windsor
- Stephenville
- Deer Lake

These offices provide invaluable coverage for various regions and population bases throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and enable Agency staff to become more familiar with regions, properties, and changing demographics, and the effects these have on property values in various regions of the province.



“ You cannot be
| everything to **everyone** |
if you decide to go **NORTH**
you cannot go **SOUTH**
at the same time. ”

PARCELS OF LAND

In all, there are approximately 189,385 parcels of land for which the Municipal Assessment Agency is responsible for assessing. This is important because the Municipal Assessment Agency establishes its base rate on a “price per parcel”, so there is a direct correlation to the number of parcels of land to be valued and the revenues generated by the Agency.

DECLINING TREND IN NEW CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION

Evidence suggests a decline in the number of new housing starts as well as home renovations since the development of our last business plan. While there was a very slight decline in the 2014 calendar year, there was a more marked decline in both the 2015 and 2016 calendar years. Chart 3.1 depicts the change in new construction (including renovations) over the past several years.

Chart 3.1



ASSESSED VALUES PROVINCIALLY

There has been a continuous rise in the assessed values of properties since 2008 (as indicated in the Chart 3.2), but in the upcoming data that has a base date of January 1, 2017 we may likely see a slight decline in assessed values. A slight decrease in the overall value of properties would seem to reflect market conditions and the effect these (and other economic factors) have on real property values. But for the immediate future, and for the 2017 assessments provided to municipalities we serve, property assessments will remain fixed on numbers provided in the January 1, 2014 base date.

Chart 3.2



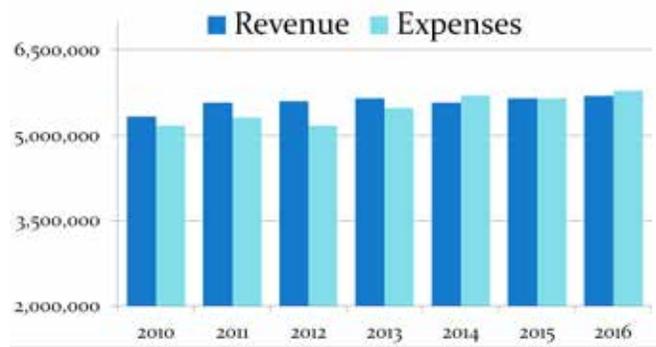
SITE VISITS

In the 2016 calendar year, staff at the Agency completed approximately 30,000 site visits throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and this is the highest number of site visits ever completed by Agency staff since its incorporation.

FINANCIAL PICTURE

As a “not for profit” agency the revenues and expenditures of the MAA must align. But as is evident in Chart 3.3, the financial health of the Agency has been (and continues to be) stable. While there are always slight fluctuations in both revenues and expenditures, we are bound by the restrictions of our incorporation, and as a Board, we hold staff accountable for our financial operations – as we should.

Chart 3.3



5.0 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson Mayor Dean Ball
Deer Lake

MUNICIPALITIES NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Vice Chairperson Mayor Elizabeth Moore
Clarke's Beach

Northern Director Mayor Dale Colbourne
St. Luniere-Griquet

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

PROFESSIONAL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATORS

Labrador Councillor Deb Barney
L'Anse au Loup

Eastern Director Ms. Vida Greening
Port Blandford

Western Mayor Dean Ball
Deer Lake

Taxpayer Representatives

Central Mayor Robert Hobbs
Bishop's Falls

Mr. Dave Denine
Mount Pearl

Eastern Mayor Paul Pike
St. Lawrence

Mr. Dave Blundon
Gander

Avalon Mayor Elizabeth Moore
Clarke's Beach

Urban Councillor Peggy Roche
Torbay

6.0 ISSUES

There were a number of different (and important) issues raised as part of the development of our business plan, and this provided us with a tremendous opportunity to consider the concerns raised, to discuss the more imminent challenges facing our organization, and to be better prepared both operationally and strategically going forward.

Some of the issues identified were the following:

Proficiency

- being lean
- maintaining our economies of scale

Adapting to Legislative Changes

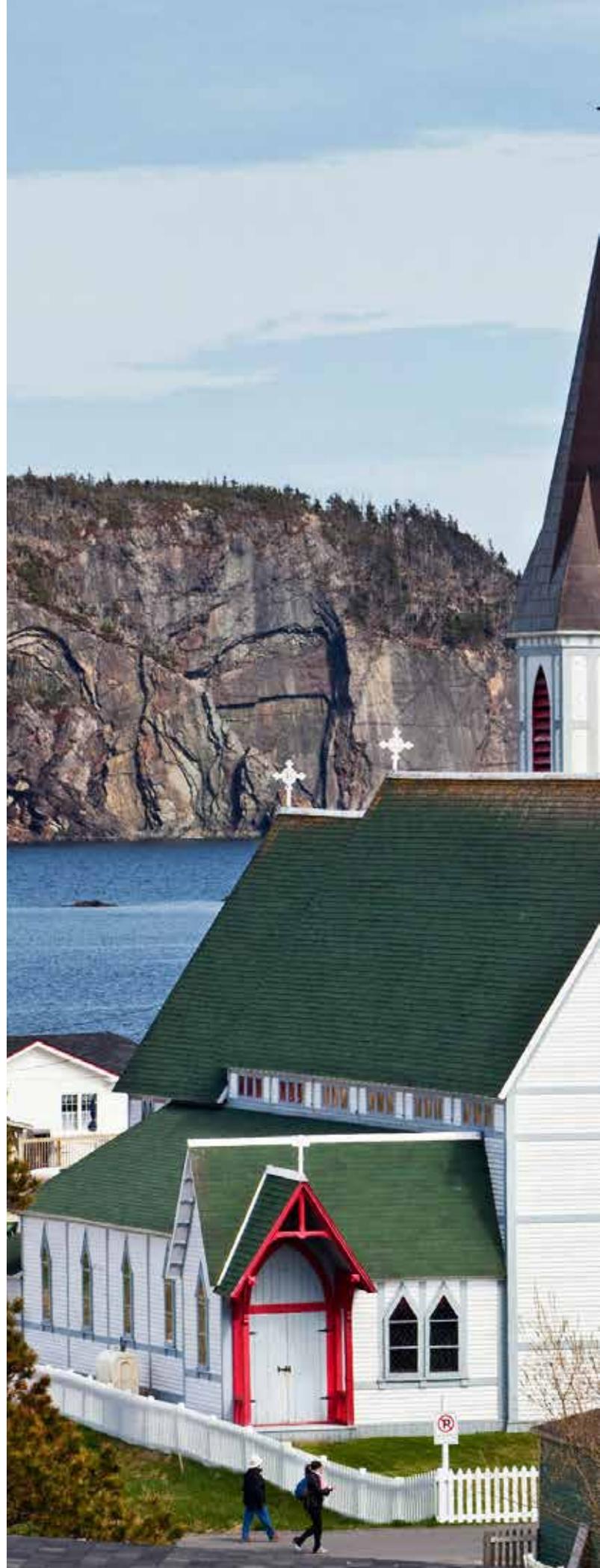
- being prepared
- anticipating revisions
- understanding the importance of maintaining a high quality service
- fear of the unknown
- current review of the Assessment Act, 2006

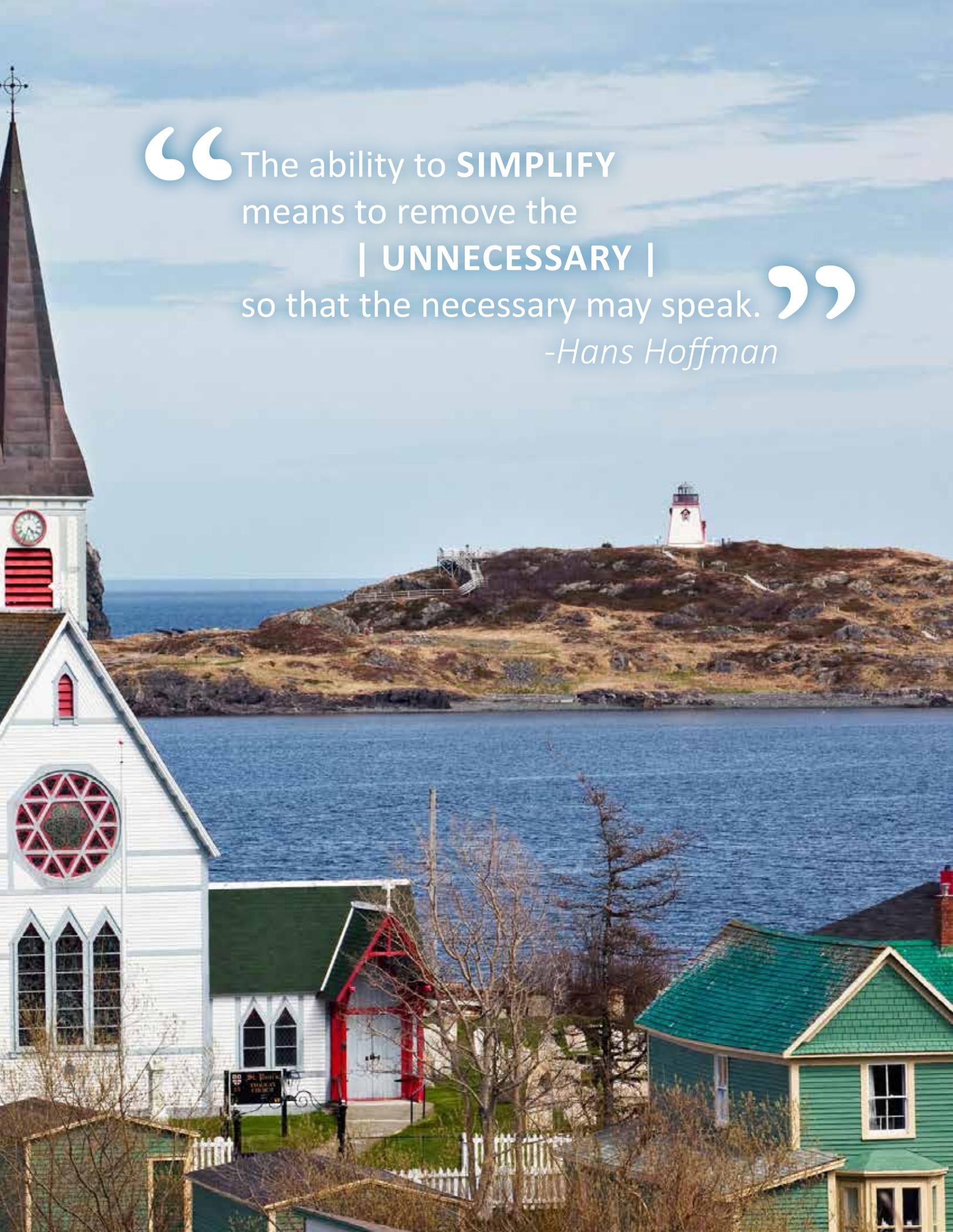
Communications

- raising awareness and educating municipal clients
- being “on message” consistently with our stakeholders
- adapting to the changing world of social media

NEW FOCUS:

While all these issues are very real and extremely important, many of these issues were considered to be internal and/or operational. A decision was made to continue to work hard to address the ever changing and ever challenging issues surrounding communication – especially communications with our external stakeholders. This is the one area that continues to provide ongoing challenges and affects a large number of clients (and others) who interact regularly with the Municipal Assessment Agency. Communications is the primary issue we will address in our revised Business Plan.





“ The ability to **SIMPLIFY**
means to remove the
| **UNNECESSARY** |
so that the necessary may speak. ”

-Hans Hoffman

7.0 DEVELOPING GOALS

The one issue that we have prioritized for this planning cycle is communications with our external clients.

Communications – includes the broad spectrum of interactions and sharing of information, data, and ideas that applies to virtually every facet of our organization – internally and externally. Our focus will be on improving our communications with our external clients.

- The first (and greatest) challenge is raising awareness about the work we do, the processes we apply in establishing real property values, and the timelines that are established to carry out our work;
- how we communicate regularly with our clients on an ongoing basis;
- communications with our Board of Directors;
- consistency of our “messages” to our clients and to the public;
- how we might integrate social media (or not).

GOAL:

- By the end of this business plan (March 31, 2020), the Municipal Assessment Agency will improve awareness and stakeholder understanding of the assessment process.

Indicators:

- frequent information & training sessions for municipal employees;
- public awareness about the work of the Agency;
- frequent opportunities for feedback as a means to improve services to our clients;
- preparation of a simplified overview (and other educational materials) outlining the work of the Municipal Assessment Agency;
- frequent interaction between management staff and the Board of Directors of the MAA;
- use of various forms of communications (and technologies);
- frequent communiqués and updates from the Agency to provide more accurate and defensible information to help increase community sustainability.



Strategic Planning Cycle



6

OBJECTIVES:

OBJECTIVE 1

By December 30, 2017 the Municipal Assessment Agency will have established reliable baseline data relating to communications to assist in identifying gaps and help determine our needs going forward.

Indicators:

- identify key stakeholders
- develop survey (and other) materials to be used
- results collated
- establish baseline information

OBJECTIVE 2

The Agency will have developed a communications strategy by March 31, 2019 to meet the professional needs of the Municipal Assessment Agency, to improve communications with stakeholders, and to help raise awareness about the work we do as an Agency.

OBJECTIVE 3

Before the end of the planning cycle (March 31, 2020), the Communications Strategy will be operational and fully implemented by the Municipal Assessment Agency.



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