

Ministry of
Community Services

2007/08
Annual Service Plan Report



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

The Ministry of Community Services continues to work collaboratively with local governments, communities in transition and seniors' and women's organizations, in order to make B.C. the best place to live, work, invest and get ahead.

I have the honour to submit the Ministry of Community Services' Annual Service Plan Report for 2007/08. This report highlights our recent achievements as we move toward fulfilling the goals of our government and the Ministry.

Over the past year, more than 120 local governments have joined the Province of B.C. and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) in signing onto the B.C. Climate Action Charter, committing to carbon neutrality by 2012.

The Ministry is strongly supporting B.C. communities to reach this goal and become greener, healthier and more active places to live through a series of programs and actions. Towns for Tomorrow is helping municipalities of 5,000 residents or less to build sustainable infrastructure; and LocalMotion is helping develop bike paths and walkways, offering better transportation options to reduce our car-dependency; and our B.C. Spirit Squares program is helping develop central gathering places for residents to come together and celebrate. At the same time, our Green City Awards are recognizing local governments that are implementing innovative, green ideas.

Our partnerships with the federal government and UBCM are further helping build vibrant and sustainable communities. Through the Gas Tax Fund, we're seeing a range of projects that lead to cleaner air, water and reduced greenhouse gases. Building on the success of our joint Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, B.C. has signed on to the federal government's \$33 billion Building Canada Plan, ensuring B.C. communities have continued access to more funding for water, wastewater, public transit, highways and green energy projects.

In addition, this year we've introduced legislation that promotes greener communities and provides the tools necessary to create more compact neighbourhoods and a stronger focus on energy conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, and affordability.

Supporting violence prevention and intervention services for women, and their children, fleeing abuse continues to be a priority. We're investing almost \$50 million annually on prevention initiatives, transition house services, safe homes, second stage housing, counselling, and many outreach services to connect vulnerable women with the services they may need. This past year we enhanced funding to transition homes to ensure 24/7 staffing, so women coming to a facility can be assisted at all hours, day and night. This was complimented by the development of a suite of violence prevention, intervention, education and awareness materials distributed across British Columbia.

To help more British Columbians to participate in our province's strong economy, the Ministry continues investing in a series of mentoring initiatives for women and has funded the expansion of BladeRunners, a program for at-risk youth, to three new communities.

To help support B.C. seniors, the fastest growing demographic in the province, the Ministry is working to address recommendations from the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues. A summary of actions to date, such as the abolition of mandatory retirement at the start of 2008, can be found in a Report on Progress prepared last summer, which can be found on our Ministry website.

The Ministry of Community Services 2007/08 Annual Service Plan Report compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry's *2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan*. I am accountable for those results as reported.



Honourable Ida Chong, FCGA
Minister of Community Services and
Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues

June 20, 2008

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Highlights of the Year

The Ministry of Community Services works to promote sustainable, liveable communities that provide British Columbians with healthy and safe places in which to live, work and invest. The following highlights reflect the accomplishments achieved by the Ministry in 2007/08.

Local Government

- The Ministry is supporting local governments to build greener, healthier and more active communities through programs that include [Towns for Tomorrow](#), [LocalMotion](#), [B.C. Spirit Squares](#), the [Green City Awards](#) and the [Canada–British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund \(MRIF\)](#). These programs support local governments with funding to provide clean drinking water systems and effective sewage treatment; to plan and build more accessible and inclusive, senior-friendly communities; and to take action on climate change.
- Amendments were made to the *Local Government Act*, *Hotel Room Tax Act* and *Mountain Resort Associations Act*. The amendments provide funding to support local tourism development through the new [B.C. Resort Municipality Initiative](#). These amendments also enable consistency and certainty about land use regulation during large multi-phase developments. Local governments will be able to enter into voluntary [Phased Development Agreements](#) with developers to prevent zoning changes during a multi-phase development.
- Amendments were also made to the *Community Charter* and will enable municipalities to use broader [Revitalization Tax Exemption](#) tools to encourage many forms of revitalization within their communities.
- The Government of Canada established a \$33 billion [Building Canada Plan](#) in Budget 2007, to address the infrastructure needs of communities across Canada. As part of the fund, the Canada/B.C. Framework Agreement was signed on November 6, 2007, ensuring that British Columbians now will see continued investments to address infrastructure needs in priority areas, including water, waste water, public transit, highways and green energy.
- 2007 was the second year of a four-year provincial government commitment to doubling the [Small Community and Regional District Basic Grants Program](#). In 2007/08, 127 municipalities and 27 regional districts received a total of \$40 million, a \$7 million increase over 2006/07, to fund important services for residents.
- Local governments were provided with \$59 million through [Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing](#), an increase of \$6 million over 2006/07. This funding supported 560 new police officers since 2003, as well as other innovative safety initiatives across the province.

- At March 31, 2008, 116 local governments had signed on to the *Climate Action Charter* demonstrating a shared commitment to become carbon neutral by 2012 and to create compact and more energy-efficient communities.
- On March 17, 2008, British Columbia, the Government of Canada and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities signed an agreement to extend the Gas Tax Agreement for four years between 2010 and 2014. The extension will provide approximately \$1 billion in additional funding for environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure.
- The Minister undertook a 10-day mission to the People's Republic of China, strengthening Asia-Pacific ties. That trip produced a formal agreement between our Province and the People's Government of Guangdong Province to encourage our respective local governments to establish such twinning arrangements. [B.C. Asia Twinning](#) encourages British Columbia communities to embrace the untapped economic potential available in Asia by establishing ties with Asia-Pacific local governments that may evolve into economically robust relationships.
- A new B.C. Asia Twinning Tool Kit was released, supporting these innovative partnerships by providing local governments in this province with the information they need to establish international twinning arrangements, or enhance existing ones. Twenty three municipalities also received a total of over \$1 million to enable expanded twinning relationships across British Columbia.
- Three new municipalities were incorporated: Barriere, Clearwater and Westside, the latter of which impacted the largest number of people in British Columbia's recent history. Becoming incorporated can result in improved governance, access to services, more integrated planning and a strengthened vision for the community.

Women's, Seniors' and Community Services

- The [BladeRunners](#) program, which trains at-risk youth for construction jobs in British Columbia, continues to exceed annual participation targets. In 2007/08, the BladeRunners program expanded to the Comox Valley, Mount Currie and Surrey, building on the success of existing programs in Vancouver, Prince George, Victoria, Nanaimo, Duncan, Port Alberni and Ucluelet.
- The Premier, the Minister and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Community Services and a delegation of Aboriginal women attended the [National Aboriginal Women's Summit](#) in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. This important event brought together Aboriginal women from across Canada who engaged and discussed potential solutions to the challenges and opportunities faced by Aboriginal women in Canada.
- The Ministry provided an additional \$2 million annually to our provincially funded [transition houses](#) to ensure 24-hour-a-day and seven-day-a-week staffing, resulting in an additional 71,900 hours of staff coverage, so staff are on-site day and night to greet women needing transition house services.

- The Ministry provided almost \$1 million for prevention funding to the Salt Spring Women Opposed to Violence and Abuse (SWOVA), the B.C./Yukon Society of Transition Houses for the Violence is Preventable (VIP) project and the Métis Nation B.C. Women's Secretariat for Métis-specific violence prevention, a symposium and community consultation. The funding provides training to British Columbians on developing healthy and respectful relationships and stopping the cycle of violence.
- The Ministry produced and distributed across the province "[Help, Hope and Healing](#)," a suite of violence prevention and intervention education and awareness materials. These materials are available in seven languages and provide important information about the community resources that are available. A brochure that addresses the unique needs of Aboriginal women was also developed and distributed in English and French.
- The Ministry provided funding for mentoring initiatives for women to enter or re-enter the workforce. These include programs provided by the YWCA of Greater Vancouver, the Wired Women's Mentorship Program (for women in science, technology and new media), the Women's Enterprise Centre, the Minerva Foundation for B.C. Women and the British Columbia Construction Association.
- The Ministry led a cross-government review of "[Aging Well in British Columbia: Report of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues](#)," and issued a Report on Progress outlining provincial initiatives that address Council recommendations.
- The Ministry provided the British Columbia Automobile Association (BCAA) Traffic Safety Foundation with funding to offer Living Well, Driving Well mature driver workshops and to develop a new driver education program focused on dementia. The funding will enable the Foundation to create resources and tools for communities and families to help deal with this challenging personal and public safety issue.
- The Ministry distributed over 70,000 copies of the eighth edition of the "[BC Seniors' Guide](#)," in seven languages. There were also more than 43,000 website hits for this guide on the Ministry's website for seniors.

Purpose of Ministry

The Ministry of Community Services' mandate is to promote liveable, sustainable communities that provide healthy and safe places for British Columbians. The Ministry supports this important mandate by working with communities, women's and seniors' groups, and by creating partnerships with other ministries, local and federal governments, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations.

The Ministry is committed to supporting treaty negotiations and enhancing local government and First Nations relations through a variety of initiatives. The Ministry played an important role in the provincial approval and implementation of the Tsawwassen First Nation and Maa-nulth First Nation Final Agreements.

Additionally, the Ministry administers all or part of [18 pieces of legislation](#) and has responsibility for the Board of Examiners, the Islands Trust Fund Board, and the Dease Lake and Atlin Advisory Planning Commissions.

Local Government

The Ministry develops policy and delivers programs and services that encourage the growth and vitality of our communities. Through partnerships with First Nations, municipalities, regional districts and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the Ministry is helping to build vibrant, connected, resilient and environmentally sustainable communities that are great places in which to live, work and invest.

The Ministry is responsible for the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act*, legislation which provides local governments with the powers, duties and functions that are necessary to address the needs of their communities. The Ministry supports local governments in meeting citizens' needs for services by working in partnership to develop vital urban centres, enhance community safety, and renew infrastructure. The Ministry's local government grants programs support the building of healthy and vibrant communities which promote active lifestyles, are senior-friendly and disability-accessible, and foster community celebration.

The Ministry contributes to government's commitment to the environment through its support for local government infrastructure projects in which environmental sustainability is the key consideration in funding decisions. The Ministry works to foster compact, green and sustainable communities through community planning and regional growth strategies, support for public transit infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and improved water, air and liquid waste management strategies.

Community Partnerships

The Ministry works with other agencies and orders of government to support the implementation of solutions to inner-city issues. The Inner-City Partnerships initiative manages a partnership with the City of Vancouver to revitalize inner-city areas.

The Ministry also provides community transition services to help rural and remote, single-resource communities manage the effects of significant financial challenges that result from the scaling back or closure of industrial operations. The Ministry works collaboratively with the Ministry of Forests and Range and the Ministry of Economic Development to develop proactive strategies to manage the impact of the mountain pine beetle epidemic on British Columbia communities.

Women

The Ministry works with other ministries and orders of government to ensure that the unique needs of women are addressed and integrated into the provincial government's various policies, legislation, programs and services.

The Ministry also provides leadership, commitment and resources to intervention and prevention services for women who have experienced abuse, and their children who have witnessed abuse, through third-party community-based contractors.

Seniors

The Ministry is committed to improving the social and economic well-being of seniors in British Columbia, supporting their continued participation in their communities and increasing their ability to live independent, healthy lives. Providing seniors with access to information on services and programs that enhance their health, activity and independence is a key component of the Ministry's work.

Strategic Context

British Columbia's economy continued its strong performance after three straight years of over 3.0 per cent growth. This economic strength has presented many advantages and opportunities for individuals and communities. The Ministry of Community Services works to bring these benefits to British Columbia's communities. Key factors that have shaped the Ministry's efforts to achieve the 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan goals and objectives are identified in this section. A strong economy enables the province to respond to a growing provincial population, aging infrastructure and increasing citizen expectations. By providing financial resources, the Ministry supports the building of healthy and vibrant communities which promote active lifestyles, are senior-friendly and disability-accessible, and foster community celebration. A strong economy also gives local governments the increased financial capacity to fund these developments through a range of initiatives, such as provincial Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing and the Federal Gas Tax Transfer and Transit Agreements. The construction sector, in particular, is booming, and while increases in material costs and labour pressures are causing some delay in project completions, communities around the province are benefiting from this economic growth.

British Columbia is taking a leadership role in addressing climate change by developing innovative strategies and advancing research into new technologies. The *British Columbia Climate Action Charter* reflects the commitment of the province, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and individual local governments to taking action on climate change at the community level. Local governments that sign the *British Columbia Climate Action Charter* pledge to become carbon neutral by 2012.



Many rural communities that have depended on natural resource industries are working to diversify their economies in light of changing market forces. The impact of the mountain pine beetle infestation, projected to affect 80 per cent of British Columbia's interior pine forests by 2013,¹ presents an enormous challenge in terms of community sustainability and environmental management in the province.

Inner-city areas also face challenges, often experiencing higher rates of unemployment and homelessness, crime, drug use and prostitution than cities experience overall. Local, provincial and federal governments, communities and the private sector are working together to develop and implement strategies that will help make the province's urban communities resilient and sustainable.

¹ "Business Indicators September 2006: Mountain Pine Beetle-Mania", BC Stats 2006.

Women in British Columbia have made social, economic and political gains in many areas, and the province's economic growth presents further opportunities for advancement. The Ministry is assisting women to achieve their highest potential through its support of mentorship and training initiatives. Helping women to enter or re-enter the workforce in skilled occupations also serves to address the provincial labour shortage.

Violence is not acceptable, particularly violence against women and girls. The Ministry works to end this violence by providing women fleeing abuse, and their children, with the supports they need, including transition houses, safe homes, second stage housing and counselling. Outreach and multicultural outreach services across the province work to connect women with those supports that will make a difference in their lives.

While providing crucial supports for women fleeing abuse, the Ministry works to end violence against women by changing the attitudes that lead to violence in the first place, engaging men and boys as partners in getting the message out to communities that violence against women is unacceptable.

January 1, 2008 marked the elimination of mandatory retirement in British Columbia. Today's seniors live longer, healthier lives and many want to continue an active lifestyle. They are often looking for opportunities to continue to participate in and contribute to society, including participation in the workforce and volunteerism.

Seniors in British Columbia constituted 14.1 per cent of the population in 2007,² and the proportion aged 65 and over is expected to rise to nearly 25 per cent by 2031.³ As the proportion of seniors in the provincial population goes up, particularly those aged 80 and over, demands on health services are expected to increase dramatically, as will demands for opportunities to lead more active lifestyles.

One of government's key priorities is the promotion of healthy living for British Columbians. ActNow BC is working with partners who are developing and implementing programs to increase physical activity; to encourage healthy food choices in school, at work and in the community; to live tobacco-free; and to make healthy choices in pregnancy. Involvement at the local level is essential to realizing the full benefits of this program, and local governments can play an important role in encouraging ActNow BC participation in communities around the province.

British Columbia continues to advance a strengthened relationship with First Nations guided by trust and by recognition of, and respect for, First Nations' rights and title. The Ministry is committed to supporting treaty negotiations and enhancing local government and First Nations

² Statistics Canada, Population by Sex and Age Group, by Province and Territory, 2007.

³ "Seniors Scan: Population Aged 65 and Over by Health Service Delivery Areas", BC Stats 2005.

relations through a variety of initiatives. The Local Government-First Nations Relations Program supports the Community to Community Forum program designed to bring elected officials from local government and First Nations together to develop working relationships. It also aims to encourage the development of agreements between local governments and First Nations on common issues and activities, assists provincial and local representatives in the B.C. Treaty Process and partners with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities First Nations Office on key initiatives.

Report on Performance

The Ministry's report on performance provides an update on how the Ministry is achieving the goals and objectives set out in the 2007/08–2009/10 Service Plan.

Performance Plan Summary Table

The table below provides a summary of the Ministry's progress with regard to its performance targets in 2007/08. The section that follows provides a detailed discussion and explanation of these results.

Goal 1: Community Governance is open, effective and accountable to its citizens For greater detail see pages 16 to 18	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
1.2 Local governments are accountable and make effective use of their legislative powers		
Percentage of municipalities operating within their liability servicing limit	>97%	97.5% ACHIEVED
Goal 2: British Columbians live in resilient, sustainable communities For greater detail see pages 18 to 23	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
2.1 Planning and infrastructure investments contribute to community sustainability	20.3% of total population	19.54% of total population
Number and percentage of British Columbians served by drinking water systems that meet emerging treatment standards for the protection of drinking water quality	862,903 total population served Additional 85,400 people with new system	831,318 total population served Additional 53,810 people with new system SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED
2.2 Communities are resilient and able to adapt to change		
Number of municipalities collecting at least 90% of their current year taxes	143	147 ACHIEVED
2.3 The capacity of urban communities to respond to socio-economic issues is strengthened		
Percentage of BladeRunners participants employed one year after participation	75%	76% ACHIEVED

Goal 3: Women are safe from domestic violence For greater detail see pages 24 to 26	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
3.1 Communities have the capacity to prevent and respond to domestic violence		
Number of women and their children sheltered through transition house services	12,450	12,693 ACHIEVED
Number of outreach services used by women and their children	35,000	55,147 EXCEEDED

Goal 5: Improved social and economic well-being for seniors For greater detail see pages 27 to 28	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
5.2 Seniors and their families have information on programs and services available		
Number of visits per year to the Seniors' website	>90,000	108,483 EXCEEDED

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Goal 1: Community governance is open, effective and accountable to its citizens

Local government is the order of government closest to communities and citizens. It delivers basic services that people rely on every day, including water and sewer infrastructure, policing, fire protection, local roads, recreation, business licensing and community planning.

Objective 1.1: Local governments are open, representative and responsive

A local government system in which citizens choose their form of governance, their elected officials and the services they receive is consistent with fundamental democratic principles. Citizens reasonably expect their local government to create the community they want to live in and to provide the services they need and desire. Elected officials who are responsive and accountable to the electorate they represent, and local government processes that are open and responsive to the changing interests of their citizens, provide communities with effective and timely governance.

The Ministry supports local governments in serving their citizens effectively by providing broadly empowering local government legislation, the *Community Charter* and *Local Government Act*. These include important checks and balances to ensure that local decision-making is open and effective, as well as requiring appropriate opportunities for ongoing citizen involvement.

Legislative amendments were made in 2007 to the *Local Government Act*, *Hotel Room Tax Act* and *Mountain Resort Associations Act*. These amendments provide funding to support local tourism development through the new [B.C. Resort Municipality Initiative](#) and ensure consistency and certainty about land use regulation during large multi-phase developments through [Phased Development Agreements](#). Amendments to the *Community Charter* also enable municipalities to use broader [Revitalization Tax Exemption](#) tools to encourage many forms of revitalization within their communities.

Strategies

- Provide a modern, empowering legislative, regulatory and policy framework.
- Promote citizens' access to local governments and build their capacity to participate in local decision-making.
- Assist local governments with incorporations, amalgamations and boundary extensions.

Objective 1.2: Local governments are accountable and make effective use of their legislative powers

In 2004, the Province enacted the *Community Charter*. With the Charter's implementation, British Columbia's relationship with local governments changed. Rather than provincial oversight and prescriptive regulation, the focus now is on local accountability and local solutions to local issues, with the Province acting in an advisory and facilitative capacity. This flexibility, along with collaboration among partners in the local government system, and between orders of government, increases local government capacity to respond innovatively to citizens' changing needs and desires.

Strategies

- Support innovation and the effective use of legislative and regulatory powers.
- Facilitate constructive relationships.
- Develop strong, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Percentage of municipalities operating within their liability servicing limit ¹	97%	99.4%	>97%	97.5% ACHIEVED

Data Source: Local governments provide the Ministry with their financial data through the annual Local Government Data Entry (LGDE) electronic reporting process at the end of their fiscal year. The Ministry's reporting requirements are comprehensive and the data received are highly accurate.

¹ Liability servicing limit is equal to 25 per cent of annual own-source municipal revenue. Own-source revenue primarily includes taxes, fees, charges, penalties, fines and investment income.

Discussion of Results

The liability servicing limit sets out the maximum amount municipalities can spend to service their long-term financial obligations for the year. The percentage of municipalities operating within this limit demonstrates how effectively local governments use their legislative and regulatory powers to develop strong partnerships and financially plan for their capital requirements, and how well they utilize the different financing options available to them.

Local governments in British Columbia borrow money for infrastructure investments through the Municipal Finance Authority with the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities. These borrowings must generally fall within their individual liability servicing limits and the Inspector approves all local government borrowing bylaws on the basis of their fiscal capacity and ability to repay the debt. This financial oversight role ensures that local governments are generally within their borrowing limits, which in turn mitigates the risk to the Municipal Finance Authority AAA credit rating, thereby enabling local governments in the province to borrow at lower than industry rates.

Goal 2: British Columbians live in resilient, sustainable communities

Objective 2.1: Planning and infrastructure investments contribute to community sustainability

Citizens in communities expect their local governments to provide them with safe drinking water and appropriate levels of waste water treatment. Communities must prepare for the current and



Seymour-Capilano Filtration Project, GVRD.

future needs of their citizens, particularly in terms of infrastructure renewal. Major infrastructure projects are expensive and often challenge the financial capacity of both large and small local governments. Provincial and federal government funding programs, such as [Towns for Tomorrow](#), the [Federal Gas Tax Transfer and Transit Agreements](#), and the [Canada/B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund](#), support local government projects aimed at improving drinking water quality and waste water treatment, contributing to greenhouse gas reductions, and generally enhancing protection of the environment.

Strategies

- Negotiate federal/provincial/local government infrastructure capital grant programs.
- Develop, implement and manage water and sewer infrastructure capital funding and infrastructure planning programs.
- Implement the [Federal Gas Tax Transfer and Transit Agreements](#), with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.
- Implement four new initiatives: [LocalMotion](#), [B.C. Spirit Squares](#), [Towns for Tomorrow](#) and [Green City Awards](#).
- Work with local governments to develop forward-looking regional strategies.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Number and percentage of British Columbians served by drinking water systems that meet emerging treatment standards for the protection of drinking water quality ¹	17.8% of total population 757,301 total population served Additional 57,474 people with new system	17.9% of total population 777,508 total population served Additional 5,207 people with new system	20.3% of total population 862,903 total population served Additional 85,400 people with new system	19.54% of total population 831,318 total population served Additional 53,810 people with new system SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED

Data Source: Contractual requirements between the province and grant recipients include quarterly quality progress reports, tied to quarterly claim payments, which are tracked within a “grants database.” Data accuracy is consistent and reliable although a database project is underway to replace the existing system. Population data are provided by BC Stats and are subject to any inherent limitations.

¹ The measure does not include groundwater, nor does it capture the percentage of the provincial population using privately owned infrastructure.

Discussion of Results

An increase in the number of British Columbians served by drinking water systems that meet emerging treatment standards is a result of the provincial and local government commitment to improving drinking water quality for all British Columbians.

The measure provides an indication of those populations served by new water treatment facilities that meet emerging standards. It provides evidence that communities are building the infrastructure using current North American regulatory standards for the treatment of surface water.

In 2007/08, an additional 53,810 British Columbians were served by drinking water systems that met emerging standards through the Ministry's [B.C. Community Water Improvement Program](#) funding initiative.

There was a 1.65 per cent increase in the total number of British Columbians served by new drinking water systems and the 2007/08 target for this measure was substantially achieved, given that there was only a 3.7 per cent variance from the target. Factors beyond the influence of the Ministry and its local government partners, such as nation-wide labour and material shortages, contributed to a delay in the completion of four projects that would have resulted in an additional 31,500 citizens benefiting from new drinking water systems. These four projects are expected to be completed during 2008/09.

Objective 2.2: Communities are resilient and able to adapt to change

Regional and local socio-economic conditions in British Columbia are constantly changing. Local governments need both the expertise and targeted funding initiatives to build their resiliency and the capacity to adapt to these ever-changing economic, social and environmental conditions. The extent to which a community is able to adapt to changing local, regional or provincial conditions can be significantly influenced by: the nature of individual community economies; differing levels of council, staff or regional district board expertise; and level of citizen engagement. For example, many local governments are taking action on climate change, by planning for liveable, sustainable communities, encouraging green developments and transit-oriented developments, and implementing innovative infrastructure technologies, including landfill gas recapture and production of clean energy.

The Ministry contributes its expertise and targeted funding through the [Small Community and Regional District Basic Grants Program](#) to build local government resiliency and capacity to adapt to changing economic, social and environmental conditions. The Ministry also plays a key role in monitoring and maintaining the integrity of the local government finance system.

Strategies

- Collaborate with local governments and provincial agencies to provide expertise and other supports to rural and resource communities in transition.
- Provide the tools and resources to ensure that local governments have the fiscal capacity needed for self-government.
- Provide resort-based municipalities in British Columbia with the tools to assist them in financing new or improved resort amenities and services in their communities.
- Promote targeted support for policing, crime prevention and community safety.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Number of municipalities collecting at least 90% of their current year taxes	137 ¹	143	143	147 ACHIEVED

Data Source: Local governments provide the Ministry with their financial data through the annual Local Government Data Entry (LGDE) electronic reporting process at the end of their fiscal year. The Ministry's reporting requirements are comprehensive and the data received are highly accurate.

¹ This figure represents 92% of municipalities in British Columbia and is based on a three-year average from 2005/06 to 2007/08.

Discussion of Results

Property taxes constitute the majority of municipalities' annual revenue, providing them with the funds they need to operate effectively and independently to provide the services expected by residents.

The target for this measure was achieved in 2007/08, with the vast majority of municipalities collecting at least 90 per cent of their current taxes, reflecting a robustness of local tax bases. The achievement of the target is a result of the Ministry's efforts to assist communities with financial management. This assistance has included assessing and modifying their tax base and/or restructuring their boundaries in such a way as to provide additional revenue for services.

British Columbia's smaller communities were further assisted to provide services for residents through Small Community Grants, increased once again this year. As well, local governments have opportunities to access support for community projects through a vast range of infrastructure and planning grant programs.

The minority of municipalities who are at risk of collecting less than 90 per cent of their taxes are generally single-resource-based communities affected by larger external market forces. Through the Community Transition Program the Ministry assists these communities to evaluate their options, review their expenditures and examine their economic development opportunities.

Objective 2.3: The capacity of urban communities to respond to socio-economic issues is strengthened

The need for inner-city revitalization challenges communities to respond effectively to complex socio-economic issues. Creating co-operative and productive partnerships among federal, provincial and local governments, businesses, and community organizations helps communities to identify and leverage resources and expertise necessary to improve social and economic outcomes. The Ministry's role in responding to socio-economic issues is facilitative, rather than directive.

“We’re looking for accomplishment, not just labourers. We’re looking for individuals who will contribute to the successes of the project and that’s what BladeRunners delivers, accomplishment and success.”

— Kim Maust, VP,
Bastion Development Corp.

Strategies

- Work with partners to address inner-city issues.
- Provide training for at-risk youth to enter employment.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Estimate
Percentage of BladeRunners participants employed one year after participation ¹	74%	70%	75%	76% ² ACHIEVED

Data Source: Third-party service providers collect data and are required by contract to submit quarterly statistical reports to the Ministry.

¹ The data collected since 2004/05 reflects the measure stated above, and not “percentage of BladeRunners participants moving into employment” as stated in previous Service Plans.

² Estimated until data collected for 2007/08 programs completed. Data expected in summer 2008. The final actual figure will be included in the 2009/10 Service Plan (as the 2007/08 baseline).

Discussion of Results

The [BladeRunners](#) program recruits and trains at-risk youth for jobs in the construction industry. The program was established in 1994 and is jointly funded by the provincial and federal governments, private sector and community organizations. It is delivered through a third-party contract model with not-for-profit organizations, which provide strong local connections, especially with the Aboriginal community, enabling a high rate of success in attracting and working with at-risk youth to place them in long-term construction-based employment. In 2007/08, it is estimated that 73 per cent of participants were of Aboriginal ancestry, with many living in inner-city communities.

The target for this measure was achieved in 2007/08. The program expanded to the Comox Valley and the Ministry had an opportunity to partner with the Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy through Aboriginal Community Career and Employment Services Society (ACCESS) to expand into Mount Currie and Surrey this year.

Objective 2.4: British Columbia has economically strong regions

British Columbia's communities are part of larger economic regions. These regions are diverse in size, geography, demographics and socio-economic status. Community resiliency and sustainability are increased if the region of which the community is a part is economically strong. Regions in turn will prosper when their individual communities are strong. Economic development is enhanced through collaboration by local, provincial and federal governments and key economic sectors, including business, education (universities and colleges), health institutions and airport and port authorities.

The Ministry has a key role in designing governance frameworks, tools and incentives that will support municipal and regional governments in acting both independently and collaboratively in order to strengthen regional economies.

Strategies

- Identify strategies to strengthen regional governance.
- Promote harmonization of regulatory requirements.

Goal 3: Women are safe from domestic violence

Objective 3.1: Communities have the capacity to prevent and respond to domestic violence

The Ministry develops programs to address violence against women in communities across the province. Programs are focused primarily on women because in general, women are more frequently subjected to severe forms of violence by men than men are by women.⁴ Women are also more likely to be victims of violence committed by someone they know, such as a partner, spouse, acquaintance, relative or ex-spouse. This underscores the need for immediate and accessible safe shelter as a critical step in finding safe exit from a dangerous situation.

To ensure that women are safe from domestic violence, the Ministry has increased funding for and investments in [services and programs](#). These include providing community-based prevention initiatives (such as engaging men as partners against domestic violence), providing safe shelter and crisis intervention, developing educational resources and increasing awareness to stop the cycle of violence at home and in communities. These investments aim to increase community capacity to effectively prevent and respond to violence against women.

Ninety-five per cent of women in British Columbia have access to transition house services within an hour of their home. In addition, 24-hour-a-day and seven-day-a-week staffing has been implemented at all provincially funded transition houses to improve safety for women and their children fleeing abuse.

Strategies

- Provide shelter for women, and their children, leaving abusive relationships.
- Provide counselling for women, and their children, who have experienced abuse.
- Provide outreach services for women at risk.
- Enhance community violence prevention initiatives.

⁴ *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, October 2006, p. 19.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Estimate
Number of women and their children sheltered through transition house services ¹	12,446	12,243	12,450	12,693 ACHIEVED

Data Source: Third-party service providers collect data and are required by contract to submit statistical reports (monthly or quarterly) to the Ministry.

¹ Service utilization is responsive to demand.

Discussion of Results

This performance measure is an indicator of the capacity of communities to respond to violence against women and ensure that women are safe in their communities and families.

The target was achieved with 12,693 women and children receiving transition house services in 2007/08, an increase from 12,243 served in 2006/07.

The measure is responsive to service demand, which can increase through enhancement of the profile and accessibility of services in communities. The target was based on data collected during the second quarter of 2006/07 and assumed a consistent rate of utilization; however, community programs are demand-driven, which affects the accuracy of forecasting the actual number of women and children accessing services.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Number of outreach services used by women and their children ¹	16,819	40,896	35,000	55,147 EXCEEDED

Data Source: Third-party service providers collect data and are required by contract to submit statistical reports (monthly) to the Ministry.

¹ Service utilization is responsive to demand.

Discussion of Results

This performance measure reflects the use of services and community capacity to provide outreach services to ensure that women are safe from domestic violence.

Outreach services help women in crisis identify and access the supports they need, including counselling programs, transition houses and safe homes, social agencies, other outreach services, and alcohol and drug services. Services can also include connecting women to longer-term supports, such as employment, housing and treatment.

The number of outreach services utilized by women and children increased from 40,896 in 2006/07 to 55,147 in 2007/08. The increase in the demand for outreach services has been met through a significant increase in funding since 2005/06, and as a result, more than 40 additional outreach services have been implemented.

Ministry Response

The Ministry continues to enhance outreach services, including funding multicultural outreach services that respond to the diverse language and cultural needs of women, help them access needed services, and assist service providers in understanding the cultural realities of their clients.

Goal 4: Women have the opportunity to reach their economic potential

Objective 4.1: Women have more opportunities to participate in the economy

The Ministry is committed to providing and supporting women with opportunities to reach their economic potential. The Ministry has successfully partnered with the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue and the Ministry of Economic Development and will continue to work with other ministries and agencies, non-government organizations, communities, provinces, and the federal government to ensure that the unique needs of women are considered in public policy, legislation, programs and services that affect women's participation in the economy.

The Ministry has supported women entering or re-entering the workforce by allocating funding for mentoring initiatives. Between April 1 and December 31, 2007, 393 mentors provided 1,650 volunteer hours to help 224 British Columbian women improve their capacity or enhance opportunities to re-enter the workforce.

Strategy

- Implement a mentoring program for women entering or re-entering the paid labour force.

Performance Results

The 2007/08 Service Plan indicated that a measure was under development for this goal. Subsequently, changes in the 2008/09 Service Plan format resulted in a more focused suite of performance measures. A measure for this goal was not included at that time; however, program performance will continue to be monitored and enhanced accordingly.

Goal 5: Improved social and economic well-being for seniors

Objective 5.1: Government responds to the Report and Recommendations of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues, "Aging Well in British Columbia"

The Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues was established in October 2005, and was tasked with examining two key issues: how to support seniors' ability to continue as contributing members of society; and how to support seniors' independence and health. In December 2006, the Council submitted its report "[Aging Well in British Columbia](#)" to government. The Report makes 16 recommendations in five key areas. These recommendations will provide direction for the province in addressing seniors' issues over the next number of years. The Ministry, working in partnership with other ministries, is leading the review and response to the recommendations.

In 2007/08 the Ministry led a cross-government review of the "Aging Well in British Columbia" report from the Council and issued a Report on Progress outlining government initiatives that address Council recommendations.

Strategy

- Lead and co-ordinate government's response to the report and recommendations of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues.

Objective 5.2: Seniors and their families have information on programs and services available

Access to current and accurate information is essential for seniors to connect with government programs and services. The Ministry provides seniors and their families and caregivers with information through the [BC Seniors' Information Line](#) (a toll-free information line), the "[BC Seniors' Guide](#)" and a [seniors' website](#). In some cases the public are still unaware of the many programs and services available to them. The Ministry continues to work with community partners to inform them of these services. Steady and significant increases in visits to the seniors' website indicate that the public are becoming more aware of the services offered.

Strategy

- Provide information about relevant services and programs for seniors.

Performance Results

Performance Measure	2005 Baseline	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Number of visits per year to the Seniors' website	31,000	82,000	95,576	>90,000	108,483 EXCEEDED

Data Source: Ministry of Community Services.

Discussion of Results

The number of visits per year to the seniors' website has continued to increase since its launch in 2004. The number of visits to the seniors' website is an indicator of information inquiries, and provides the Ministry with a measure of the usefulness of this electronic resource. The intended outcome is that greater access to information will enhance seniors' opportunities to identify programs and services that will maintain, or increase, their active participation in society.

The actual visits to the website exceeded the target set for 2007/08 and was 13 per cent higher than in 2006/07. Of the top 20 pages visited, 16 were portions of the 2006 "BC Seniors' Guide," indicating significant public use of this resource.

Ministry Response

The Ministry will continue to update the website and provide new material to ensure that it meets the needs of British Columbia's seniors and their families.

Report on Resources

2007/08 Resource Summary Table

Core Business Areas	2007/08 Estimated	Other Authorizations ¹	2007/08 Total Estimated	2007/08 Actual	Variance (Actual minus Total Estimated)
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Local Government	196,650	9,496	206,146	205,779	(367)
Women's, Seniors' and Community Services	55,838	0	55,838	54,713	(1,125)
Executive and Support Services	9,087	0	9,087	8,916	(171)
Total	261,575	9,496	271,071	269,408	(1,663)
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)					
Local Government	96	0	96	94	(2)
Women's, Seniors' and Community Services	37	0	37	41	4
Executive and Support Services	70	0	70	75	5
Total	203	0	203	210	7
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)					
Local Government	725	0	725	110	(615)
Women's, Seniors' and Community Services	375	0	375	234	(141)
Executive and Support Services	880	0	880	941	61
Total	1,980	0	1,980	1,285	(695)²

¹ "Other Authorizations" include access to Contingencies of up to \$10 million.

² Approximately 95 per cent of the Ministry's capital funding envelope is ear-marked for information technology assets to maintain client-centred service delivery, make the most effective use of resources, and expand operational efficiencies. During 2007/08, actual expenditures for information technology were significantly less than anticipated due to project delays on the Ministry's two key system projects.

Resource Summary

Government transfers to service partners accounted for 92.6 per cent of gross expenditures before external recoveries. Most of these transfers support local governments, as well as funding prevention and intervention services for women and their children fleeing abuse.

Salary and benefit costs for employees accounted for 5.2 per cent of Ministry expenditures, and other operating costs (i.e., information technology, building occupancy costs, and office expenses) accounted for the balance (2.2 per cent).

Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

Appendix A: Ministry Hyperlinks

Ministry of Community Services

www.cserv.gov.bc.ca

Ministry Organizational Chart

www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/Ministry/org_chart

Ministry of Community Services Key Legislation

www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/Ministry/legislation

Agencies, Boards and Commissions

www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/Ministry/agencies_boards_commissions

Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information

Local Government:

www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/lgd/index.htm

Policy and Research Branch

PO Box 9847 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T2
Telephone: 250 387-4050
Fax: 250 387-6212

Governance and Structure Division

PO Box 9839 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T1
Telephone: 250 387-4022
Fax: 250 387-7972

University Endowment Lands

5495 Chancellor Blvd
Vancouver BC V6T 1E2
Telephone: 604 660-1808
Fax: 604 660-1874

Intergovernmental Relations and Planning Division

PO Box 9841 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T2
Telephone: 250 387-4037
Fax: 250 387-8720

Infrastructure and Finance Division

PO Box 9838 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T1
Telephone: 250 387-4060
Fax: 250 356-1873

Appendix B: Ministry Contact Information (cont'd)

Women's, Seniors' and Community Services:

www.gov.bc.ca/cserv/

Community Partnerships Branch

PO Box 9837 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T1
Telephone: 250 387-0220
Fax: 250 387-1407

Community Programs Branch

PO Box 9899 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9T9
Telephone: 250 356-9340
Fax: 250 356-0542

Seniors' and Women's Partnerships and Information Branch

PO Box 9825 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9W4
Telephone: 250 953-4504
Fax: 250 356-0542

