

# Results at a Glance



## Evaluation of Roadways Management

### Objective and Scope

Consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Board *Policy on Results* (2016) and the associated Directive on Results and Standard on Evaluation, the evaluation focused on effectiveness and efficiency, guided by the following questions:

#### Effectiveness

- Does the governance framework support effective management?
- Are outputs consistent across field units?
- Have the roadways management outcomes been achieved?

#### Efficiency

- Does the current model for roadways management result in efficient delivery of activities?
- To what extent is the funding for roadways management sustainable?

The scope of the evaluation included all roadways managed by Parks Canada with the exception of pedestrian and vehicular bridges within Ontario and Quebec Waterways, and roadways within Parks Canada townsites. This evaluation covers the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Further details on methods, evaluation questions, expectations, and indicators are found in the full report.

### Key Findings

#### Effective Management

Evidence indicated that management structures were in place for roadway operations and capital projects, with oversight divided among field units, Highway Engineering Services, the Highway Operations Unit, and Investment Management.

Strategic priorities of the roadways program were closely tied to the implementation of the Federal Infrastructure Investment (FII) initiative, which shaped new organizational structures and business processes.

At the operational level, roles and responsibilities were generally clear but not well documented. The division of higher-level responsibilities among the functional units was not well understood by staff across the Agency.

#### Consistent Activities and Outputs

As Parks Canada does not have in place national policy direction for the management of roadways, alignment with policies could not be assessed. In the absence of policy guidance, field units were found to apply a mix of provincial standards, Parks Canada directives, and environmental legislation.

Several lines of evidence indicated that roadways activities were similar across field units, with variations mostly due to practical factors such as terrain, weather, and the types of roads being managed (such as highways versus access roads). Variations were also found in both road maintenance records and information management practices.

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Parks Canada operates and maintains 3,300 kilometres of roadways, including over 1,000 kilometres of highways, within national parks, national park reserves, and national historic sites. In addition to facilitating visitor experiences, many of these roadways link communities to essential services as well as regional and national transportation corridors.

A total of 31 field units manage the operations of roadways and related assets (i.e. bridges, wildlife crossings, culverts, and other structural elements), ensuring public safety and mobility while minimizing risk to the Agency and its cultural and natural resources.

Parks Canada is also responsible for design and construction activities related to the recapitalization of its roads and highways.

#### Achievement of Outcomes

Evidence that Parks Canada was achieving the following desired outcomes was identified:

- **Communications:** strategies were in place to inform visitors and travellers of road conditions, delays, risks, and closures.
- **Maintained and Improved Roads:** significant improvements to the roadways (highways in particular) were achieved through the FII initiative.
- **Minimized Environmental and Cultural Impacts:** practices were in place to limit negative environmental impacts. Evidence of consultations and engagement with Indigenous communities were also identified.
- **Due Diligence:** examples of good practices were found in areas such as construction, health and safety, and maintenance documentation.

Although roadway safety and reliability were found to be an operational priority across Parks Canada, data were not sufficient to assess this area.

#### Efficiency and Funding

Financial analyses, supported by case study findings, indicated that roadways are not resourced to meet demands. The roadway inspection program does not have stable funding, which will eventually limit the Agency's ability to manage efficiently, invest in preventative maintenance, and make strategic investments. Evidence show that roadway funding levels can have negative impacts on the planning and delivery of visitor programs, asset management, and other activities within field units.



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### Recommendations and Management Response

#### Recommendation 1: Directives and Guidelines

The Senior Vice-President, Operations, should ensure that clear policy direction and standards are in place for roadway operations, maintenance, and construction. Consideration should be given to the variations in operating conditions (climate, road types, etc.) across field units; maintenance standards in particular should account for local conditions and be legally defensible, while aligning with the larger Parks Canada roadway policy.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Operations Directorate will prepare a Roadway Standard for approval. The Agency's new Real Property Management Directive that is required by Treasury Board by May 2022 will include direction relating to the management of roadway assets.

#### Recommendation 2: Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Vice-President, Operations, should ensure that accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities are clear and well documented for all functional units with impacts on roadway activities. Consideration should be given to clarifying accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities for: roadway maintenance and capital projects; strategic asset management, including asset data management and quality assurance; investment planning for roadway categories 1 through 6; and roadway operations, particularly in areas where multiple functional units (e.g. HES, the HOU, and field units) operate in close proximity.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Senior Vice-President of Operations will provide direction on authorities, accountabilities, roles and responsibilities related to roadway management to be incorporated into a new Real Property Management Directive for the Agency. The Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate will ensure the direction is incorporated into the Real Property Management Directive.

#### Recommendation 3: Performance Measures

The Senior Vice-President, Operations, and the Vice-President, Strategic Policy and Planning, should ensure that key performance metrics for highways and roads are identified, collected, and monitored. Consideration should be given to Parks Canada's capacity to collect robust performance metrics for both safety and reliability, such as traffic counts, vehicle classification, collision data, and safety audits.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Operations Directorate will work with the Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate to review existing performance metrics and identify any additional performance metrics that should be collected and monitored with consideration given to cost of collecting and usefulness of data. The review will include the identification of who is responsible for collecting, compiling and reporting on each performance metric and will be formalized in the Roadway Standards.

#### Recommendation 4: Support for Planning and Maintenance Strategies

Leveraging Parks Canada's roadway expertise, the Senior Vice-President, Operations, should consider means to support field units in analysing inspection data, capital planning, life-cycle management and roadway maintenance delivery models. Consideration should be given to assisting field unit staff in preparing for the effects of returning to pre-FIL funding levels, and preparing their sites and infrastructures for the impacts of climate change.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The recommendations brought forward to the Senior Vice-President of Operations relating to authorities, accountabilities and roles and responsibilities will consider the roadway expertise within the agency and how to most effectively leverage this expertise to support the agency in all aspects of roadway management including inspection, capital planning, life-cycle management, roadway maintenance delivery models and preparing for climate change.

