

# Annual Report

2023-24

## MINISTRY OF HIGHWAYS

# Letters of Transmittal



The Honourable Lori Carr  
Minister of Highways

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

I respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Ministry of Highways for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

With the 2023-24 budget the Ministry of Highways continued its support of *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan* by improving 1,095 km of highways. The 5-year \$65 million commitment to enhanced intersection safety was completed and the ministry invested its largest amount ever in Northern transportation. Delivering on these types of improvements is how Highways continues to support Saskatchewan's economic growth.

Lori Carr  
Minister of Highways



Kyle Toffan  
Deputy Minister of  
Highways

The Honourable Lori Carr  
Minister of Highways

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Highways for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

The ministry made strategic investments to make roads safer, strengthen key transportation corridors and support economic growth. It also continued to invest in municipal roads and bridges, community airports and shortline railways, supporting all modes of transportation that power our export-based economy.

Kyle Toffan  
Deputy Minister of Highways

# Ministry Overview

## Mandate Statement

The ministry manages and provides for the future development of an integrated sustainable provincial transportation system, which supports economic growth and prosperity for Saskatchewan. Our infrastructure investments will be guided by strategic transportation policy and incorporate operating and maintenance practices which promote the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

## Mission

To enable the safe, reliable, and sustainable mobility of people and goods to support Saskatchewan's growth and quality of life.

## Vision

Transportation – Connecting Saskatchewan to the World.

## About the Ministry of Highways

Saskatchewan's road network is the largest in Canada on a per capita basis. The network consists of 26,483 km of provincial highways, including 12,558 km of asphalt concrete pavement, 3,727 km of granular pavement, 4,187 km of thin membrane surface (TMS) highways, 5,732 km of gravel highways and 279 km of ice roads. The ministry also operates and maintains 697 bridges, more than 62,000 culverts, 12 ferries, one barge and 16 northern airports.

The ministry's core lines of business focus on providing transportation infrastructure and services for a growing Saskatchewan by planning, designing and building, maintaining, operating, regulating and developing policies for the transportation system. In everything the ministry does, safety is the top priority.

Planning includes working with stakeholders and partners, forecasting future transportation infrastructure needs and developing plans and prioritizing investments to meet these needs.

Designing and building includes upgrading or new construction of provincial highways, bridges, culverts, airports and ferries. It involves the development of engineering standards, general location and functional planning for new infrastructure, detailed project location determination, design and construction management, as well as providing engineering services for major construction projects and maintenance activities.

Maintaining involves management of the current transportation network, including provincial highways, bridges, culverts, northern airports and ferries. Maintenance activities are focused on ensuring a sustainable transportation system that meets national and provincial standards and is available for the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people and goods.

Operating involves the delivery of a wide range of citizen services to ensure the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people and goods. This includes access control, safety assessments, issuing development permits, pavement marking, signing, lighting, mowing, winter snow and ice control, ferry and airport operations and providing better customer service.

Regulating involves the development and enforcement of transportation legislation and regulation with a specific focus on commercial vehicles, provincial shortline railways, and roadside development.

Developing policies includes working with other jurisdictions, industry stakeholders and shippers to gain local knowledge to create conditions for the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of people and goods, supporting economic and provincial growth and meeting the challenges growth brings.

### **2023-24 Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTE)**

The ministry utilized 1267.9 FTEs, including students.

### **The Minister of Highways is responsible for the following Acts and Regulations**

The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997 – except sections 3, 4, 5, 53, 54, 55 and 56 which are jointly assigned to the Minister of Highways and the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement and sections 10, 21, 22, 37, 52, 57 and 62 to 66 which are jointly assigned to the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

- *The Controlled Access Highways Regulations*
- *The Provincial Highway Sign Control Regulations*
- *The Provincial Highways Designation Regulations, 1990*
- *The Highways and Transportation Act Regulations*
- *The Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations, 2010*
- *The Security of Loads Regulations*
- *The Trip Inspection Regulations*
- *Railway Line (Short Line) Financial Assistance Regulations*

The Dangerous Goods Transportation Act

- *The Dangerous Goods Transportation Regulations*

The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act

The Railway Act

- *The Final Offer Arbitration (Railway) Regulations*

The Sand and Gravel Act

The Traffic Safety Act – but only with respect to:

- *The Commercial Vehicle Drivers Hours of Service Regulations*

*Public Works and Services Act* – Jointly assigned to the Minister of Highways and the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement except with respect to clauses 4(2)(a) to (g), (i) to (l), (n) and (o) and section 8, which are jointly assigned to the Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Highways.

*The Executive Government Administration Act* – The ministry is not responsible for the Act, but the following regulations pursuant to the Act:

1. *The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure Regulations; and,*
2. *The Railway Line (Short line) Financial Assistance Regulations (Enacted in June 2004).*

**2023-24 The Ministry of Highways 2023-24 Business Plan**

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/api/v1/products/120477/formats/139306/download>

## Progress on Goal 1: Improved Safety and Environmental Sustainability

The ministry works to continually improve road safety, worker safety, environmentally responsible delivery of operations and projects, and minimizing the impact of transportation on the environment. These are important to ensuring the safety of ministry employees, Saskatchewan citizens and their families, as well as ensuring Saskatchewan communities are strong and safe. The ministry takes a proactive, risk-based approach to identify, mitigate, and respond to safety and environmental hazards. We strive to reduce and prevent serious injuries and fatalities through multi-year investments in road safety and infrastructure.

### **Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Target reductions in fatalities and injuries by delivering safety improvements on the transportation system.

### **Key Actions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Continue to implement the road safety strategy to reduce fatalities and injuries from collisions. The strategy is focused on intersections, dark driving conditions, single vehicles running off the road and collisions with wildlife.
  - Invest \$12.4 million towards the fifth and final year of the ministry's five-year \$65 million enhanced intersection commitment.
    - In 2023-24, the ministry invested \$21.5 million in road safety improvements, including \$17.9 million to enhance intersection safety with projects like rumble strips, lighting and turning lanes, \$2.9 million through the Safety Improvement Program (SIP) on projects like pedestrian crossings, guardrails, and channelizing (turn) lanes, as well as \$0.7 million on safety improvements associated with major projects such as intersection improvements included in passing lane projects.
    - The ministry delivered the five-year commitment by investing \$65.5 million on intersection safety improvements between 2019-20 and 2023-24.
  - Deliver the pavement marking program to provide visible pavement lines for the safe flow of traffic.
    - In 2023-24, the ministry completed 20,347 km of centre line marking and 28,086 km of edge line marking for a total of 48,433 km. The ministry also completed 14,993 pavement sign units.
  - Deliver the signing stewardship program to rehabilitate, replace and install new signs to keep the overall condition of the approximately 120,000 regulatory, warning, guide, and information signs on the provincial network in good condition.
    - In 2023-24, the ministry completed 5,447 single post repairs and installations, 1,678 double post repairs and installations, 2,518 sign face

replacements, and 18 I-Beam installations.

- Deliver the mowing program, which will achieve approximately 43,500 hectares of mowing along highway right of ways.
  - In 2023-24, the ministry completed 45,222 hectares of mowing, of which 44,156 hectares were completed under mowing contracts and 1,066 hectares were completed under agreements with rural municipalities.
- Improve traffic flow and increase safety through the construction and planning of major capacity and safety improvement projects, including:
  - Highway 5 corridor improvements east of Saskatoon; and,
    - Phase One included widening, grade improvements, safety improvements and paving of 10.58 km and was completed in 2021-22.
    - Phase Two includes two sets of passing lanes (one set was completed in 2023-24 with the other planned for 2024-25), widening, grade improvements, safety improvements, and paving of about 30 km. In 2023, the work was completed on the first 15 km. The second 15 km is planned for completion in 2024.
    - Phase Three includes twinning, grade improvements, safety improvements, and 10 km of paving. Work on the third phase is planned between 2024 and 2026.
  - Highway 6 and 39 corridor planning and beginning the construction of twinning projects near Rowatt and Corinne.
    - This is a multi-year project. The designing of three segments of twinning including south of Regina near Rowatt, through Corinne, and west of Weyburn, for a total of approximately 20 km was completed in 2022-23.
    - The construction of Rowatt and Corinne segments for a total of 15 km started in 2023 and will be completed in 2024.
    - The Weyburn section is planned for construction in 2024 and 2025.
  - Ensure rail line safety through inspections and safety management plan (SMP) audits.
    - All annual targets for railway safety inspection and audit activities were completed. The ministry audits about 20 per cent of SMPs and delivers shortline track and grade crossings on three and four-year cycles annually.

**Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Foster a culture of safety by enforcing an injury prevention strategy to pursue Mission Zero.

**KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Communicate safe driving practices to the public through the Work Zone and Snow Zone campaigns to reinforce slowing to 60 km/h in work zones and driving safely when approaching snowplows.
  - The Work Zone campaign emphasized slowing down in work zones through a mix of digital advertising, radio and television spots and organic social media. The Work Zone digital advertising campaign ran from May to September, primarily targeting younger drivers and new Canadians through online social media platforms. The campaign achieved 16 million impressions.

- The focus of the Snow Zone campaign was encouraging drivers to check the Highway Hotline prior to traveling. An additional focus of the social media campaign was encouraging drivers to give space to snowplows so they can do their jobs safely. The digital Snow Zone campaign ran from November to March, targeting young drivers in the 16-24 demographic and adults in the 25-54 age range. The campaign achieved 11.7 million impressions.
- Reinforce safe workplace practices and behaviors by conducting work zone audits on construction projects and maintenance activities.
  - The ministry's Safety Branch completed 41 work zone audits.
- Continue to deliver and improve the Ministry's Health and Safety Management System to achieve and sustain a healthy and safe workplace.
  - A Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) ensures the development of interconnected, standardized procedures to handle occupational health and safety hazards and risks throughout all levels and functions of the organization. In 2023-24 the ministry focused on improving field related risk assessments as well as continuing to work on its three-year cycle for standard operating procedure reviews.
  - In 2023-24 the ministry focused on enhancing employee's psychological health and wellness through the provision of mental health and wellness resources and communications.
  - At the end of 2023-24, 85 per cent of the planned HSMS standards have been implemented or are in progress.

**Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Provide environmental stewardship on all ministry activities through responsible operations, maintenance, and project delivery.

**KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Perform audits to assess project delivery and compliance with federal and provincial environmental regulations.
  - Environmental compliance audits were performed on several construction projects with prioritizing work near water. The results and process observations from audits are used for ongoing improvement.
- Explore and implement environmentally sustainable approaches for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining the transportation system.
  - A Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) multi-year project to determine construction specifications started in 2022-23. FDR projects consume less new material and require less trucking because roadbed material is reused.  
Phase one of the project, including research and investigations was completed in 2022-23.  
Phase two of the FDR project completed in 2023-24. It included the documentation of the specifications and development of new sections in the ministry's Surfacing Manual.
  - In 2023-24, a trial project was conducted to assess and explore the quality of the final road product when incorporating Reclaimed Asphalt



Pavement (RAP) into base aggregate production. Utilizing RAP offers an eco-friendly and cost-effective approach to highway construction, diverting solid materials from landfill sites and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

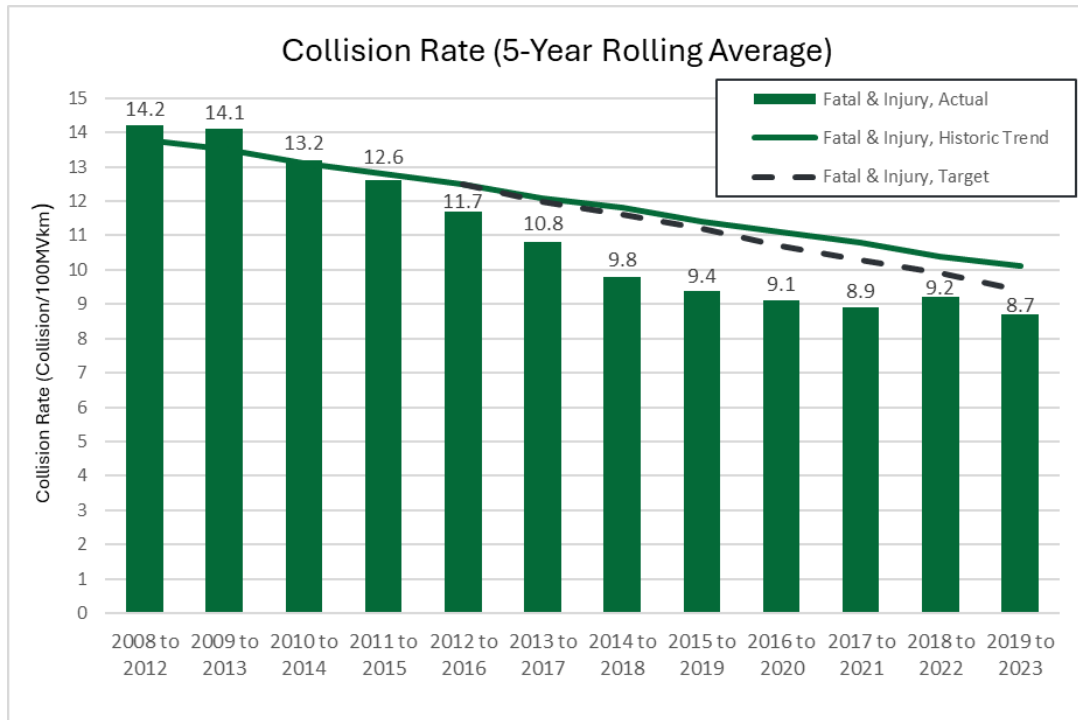
- Cold in Place specifications for pavement rehabilitation specifications were developed in 2023-24. This type of repaving recycles the top five to 12 centimetres of the road reducing new material required and the associated hauling of material. The ministry began screening future projects for compatibility with this technology.

**Performance Measure Results:**

**Reduction in fatality and injury collisions rate**

**Target = five-year (2021 to 2025) rolling average of 8.9 collisions per 100 million vehicle kilometres traveled.**

- The five-year rolling average for each year is the combined total of injury and fatality rates for that year. The result for the five-year average ending in 2022 was 9.2 and the preliminary result for the five-year average ending in 2023 is 8.7.



Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation Standards Branch

This measure uses a five-year rolling average collision rate for fatality and injury collisions to track highway safety over time. The ministry aims to reduce the rate through operations and maintenance practices and infrastructure safety improvements delivered through the road safety strategy. Focus areas of the safety strategy are incidents relating to dark driving conditions, intersections, single vehicles running off the road and wildlife.

### **Per cent of provincially regulated railway Safety Management Plans (SMP) audited on a five-year cycle**

**Target = 100 per cent of plans on file with the ministry by March 31, 2027.**

- In 2023-24, as part of the five-year cycle, the ministry audited 24 industrial railways. Forty-six audits out of 91 required, or 51 per cent are complete.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Transportation Policy and Programs Branch*

Safety management plans are used by industry and the ministry to ensure that procedures are in place to prevent or address rail incidents. To obtain an operating license from the Highway Traffic Board, it is a requirement of short line and industrial rail lines to have a safety management plan. The SMP audit includes a review of records, as well as a physical inspection.

### **Per cent of short line inspections performed within specified timelines**

- In 2023-24, the second year of the four-year cycle, the ministry inspected 477 grade crossings. After two-years 65 per cent (777 out of 1,201 grade crossings) of the four-year cycle of grade crossing inspections is complete.
- In 2023-24, the third year of the three-year cycle, the ministry inspected 617 km of short line tracks. After three years, 100 per cent (2,131 out of 2,131 km) of the three-year cycle of track inspections is complete.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Transportation Policy and Programs Branch*

There are 1,201 short line public grade crossings and 2,131 kilometres of short line track in the province. A crossing is where the rail line intersects with a road. The ministry inspects the crossings on a four-year cycle to ensure the safe movement of rail cars, and recommends repairs to the short line companies. The ministry inspects rail lines on a three-year cycle to ensure the safe movement of rail cars, and recommends repairs to the short line and industrial rail line companies.

### **Number of work zone safety audits performed by the ministry**

**Target = 50 Work Zone audits**

- In 2023-24, the ministry performed 41 work zone safety audits.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Safety and Environment Resource Branch*

The ministry performs regular safety inspections on work zone locations. This is done to improve the safety of workers and road users, so that incidents are prevented.

### **Number of safety incidents in work zones and snow zones**

- In 2023-24, there were 30 work zone and 13 snow zone incidents.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Safety and Environment Resource Branch*

This is a measure of safety incidents occurring in ministry work zones and snow zones. An incident is an unplanned event that results in or has the potential to result in injury or property damage. A work zone is a controlled and marked area where active work is ongoing, typically noted with work zone signage. Snow zone incidents are between the public and a snowplow.

## Progress on Goal 2: Improved Road Conditions

The ministry maintains over 26,400 kilometres of highways, the largest per capita network in Canada. Optimizing asset life cycles and ensuring quality work and service levels is an important part of reliable and safe access for Saskatchewan's communities and businesses. This goal is about preserving and maintaining roads and bridges, addressing aging infrastructure, and providing road users with essential information on road conditions. This goal delivers on the 10-year Growth Plan goals to build and upgrade 10,000 kilometres of highways, including over 2,000 kilometres of thin membrane surface roads, as well as rebuilding 200 bridges and replacing 2,000 culverts to support a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

### **Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Maintain and rehabilitate provincially owned transportation infrastructure to improve the driving experience and optimize service life of provincial highways.

### **KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Deliver 230 kilometres of repaving of highways, which renews the pavements life cycle by restoring it to new condition.
  - In 2023-24, 192 km of capital rehabilitation of paved highways was completed. As part of asset management practices, the ministry endeavors to repave highways in a timely and effective manner, which ensures that existing highway infrastructure remains safe for years to come.
- Deliver 300 kilometres of medium pavement treatments like thin lift over lays or micro-surfacing, which primarily mitigate rutting and improve longevity.
  - In 2023-24, 321 km of medium treatments were completed. Medium treatments on pavements include work such as thin lift overlays, rut fills with seal coat over top and micro-surfacing. These help to restore skid resistance, eliminate minor surface bumps and level wheel ruts which prevents hydroplaning and further surface deterioration from weather and traffic.
- Deliver 340 kilometres of light pavement treatments like sealcoats, which seal the surface from moisture and increase longevity.
  - In 2023-24, 405 km of sealcoat treatments were completed. Light pavement treatments are delivered as seal coats. A sealcoat involves placing hot liquid asphalt and crushed gravel. Seal coats provide a waterproof, non-skid surface that reduces deterioration and cracking and prolongs pavement life by preventing water from entering the roadbed.
- Deliver 115 kilometres of upgrades to rural provincial highways.

- In 2023-24, the ministry completed 128 km of low volume highway upgrades.
- Deliver 35 kilometres of gravel surface rehabilitation projects.
  - The ministry accomplished 42 km of gravel surface rehabilitation.
- Extend the service life and ensure the adequacy of bridge and drainage structures.
  - Replace 13 short span bridges at end of their service life with new bridges or culverts;
    - Fourteen short span bridges at the end of their service life were replaced with new bridges or culverts.
  - Complete major repairs on one bridge to extend the service life of large span bridges; and,
    - The ministry delivered one major repair on the Highway 6 Northbound bridge over Regina’s Ring Road.
- Replace over 100 culverts.
  - In 2023-24, the ministry completed 33 new culvert installations, and the replacement of 96 culverts. Culverts are an important part of the transportation network, allowing water to flow from one side of the highway to the other without eroding the road surface or base and can prevent damage to adjacent landowner’s property. Replacing underperforming or at-risk culverts keeps corridors open and prevents potential road closures, maintaining the availability of the highway network.

**Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Support a well-informed transportation user by communicating road conditions.

**KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

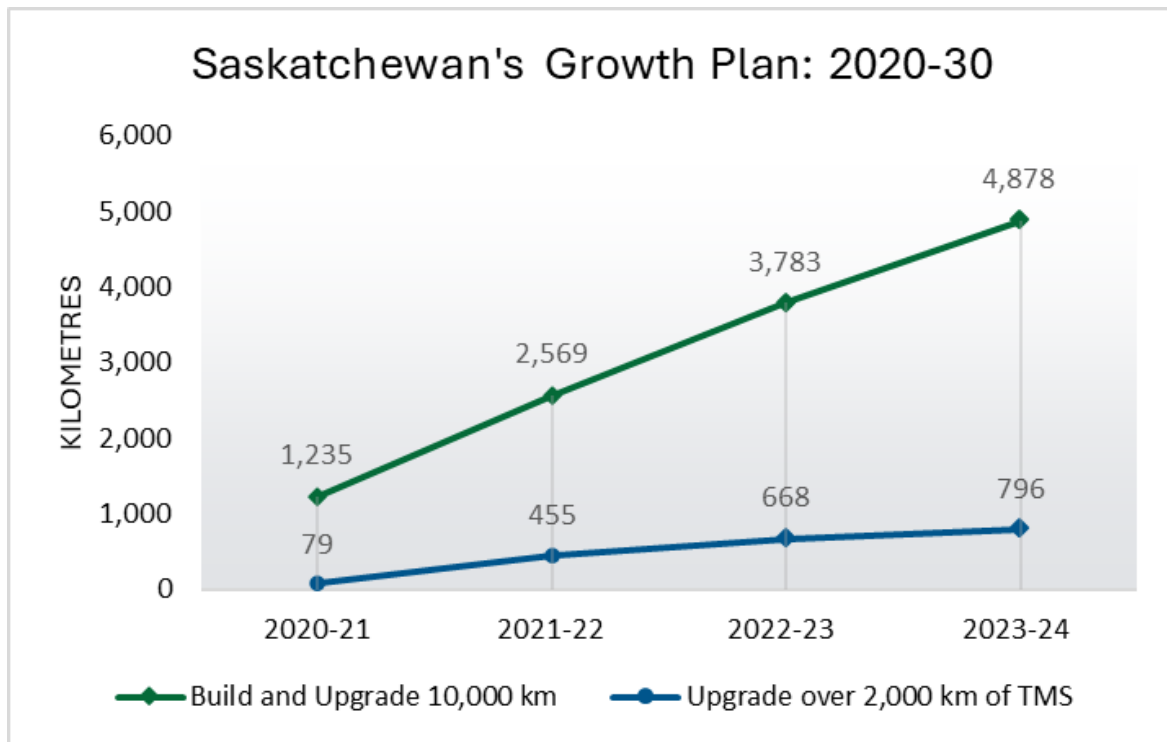
- Continue to provide accurate, timely and reliable road information for travelers through the Highway Hotline.
  - In 2023-24, the ministry delivered and maintained accurate and timely updates for road condition information including construction, emergency incidents, overdimensional vehicle routing and tracking, flooding, forest fires through Highway Hotline. For the flow of information and improving the user experience, various updates were implemented to the website and mobile app.
  - A “Track My Plow” feature and a commercial over dimensional tracking feature were added to the public application. Track My Plow shows the path of snowplows as they provide snow and ice control on the highways. It gives drivers additional knowledge that allows them to make informed decisions about winter travel.
- Continue to invest in Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) devices such as cameras, variable message signs, road weather information systems, and traffic counters to increase the accuracy and timeliness of information available to transportation users.
  - In 2023-24, the ministry installed six cameras that provide information to the Highway Hotline website and four Variable Message Signs (VMS). The ministry has an ITS plan that is aimed at enhancing service, data

collection and increasing road safety through the implementation of devices as well as creating efficiencies in the Traffic Management Centre and Highway Hotline operations.

**Performance Measure Results:**

**Number of kilometres that are built or upgraded**  
**Target = 10,000 kilometres by 2029-30.**

- In 2023-24, the ministry built or upgraded 1,095 km. After four years the ministry has completed 4,878 km or 49 per cent of the ten-year plan.

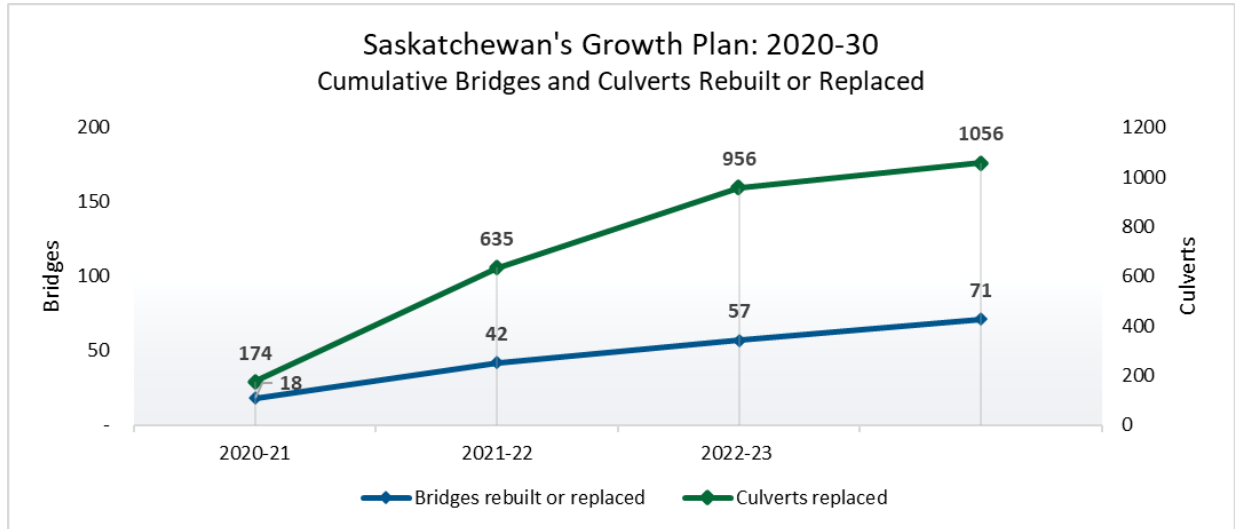


Source: Ministry of Highways, Project Support Office

The ministry continues to support Growth Plan goals by expanding the number of passing lanes and TMS improvements, such as light pavement construction, spot improvements, and upgrading some highways to good sustainable gravel surfaces.

**Number of bridges and culverts replaced or rehabilitated**  
**Target = 200 bridges and 2,000 culverts by 2029-30.**

- There are 697 bridges on the provincial transportation network. In 2023-24, the ministry replaced or rehabilitated 15 bridges. This work is allowing the ministry to maintain the safety of its bridge assets.



Source: Ministry of Highways, Project Support Office

The ministry uses a bridge condition index to assess the general health of the provincial bridge inventory. This is used to identify and prioritize structures that need replacing or rehabilitation.

**Per cent of pavements in fair to very good condition on the National Highway System (NHS)**

**Target = 90 per cent.**

- Condition results in 2023 based on International Roughness Index (IRI) indicated that 90 per cent of NHS pavements are in fair to very good condition.

Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation Standards Branch

The ministry maintains over 16,000 kilometres of paved highway, including 4,013 kilometres on the NHS. The ministry uses a measure of roughness to represent road condition. This information, when combined with other data, determines when repaving or other pavement preservation treatments are needed.

## Progress on Goal 3: Integrated Transportation Infrastructure Network

The transportation system connects Saskatchewan communities to jobs, markets, essential services, families, schools, and recreation. Most trips do not begin and end on provincial highways, so the ministry takes a one-network approach to municipal and provincial transportation system integration to better utilize the existing network and achieve economic growth and quality of life outcomes. The ministry also supports airports and regulates short line rail to ensure safety and economic competitiveness. We work with partners to manage transportation assets effectively and efficiently, as well as plan and fund strategic investments to improve and maintain access to communities and industries.

### **Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Work with stakeholders and community partners to manage traffic demand and improve transportation asset conditions through a one-network approach.

### **KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Invest \$15 million through the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program. RIRG is a partnership agreement with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) for municipal road and bridge enhancement and preservation.
  - Continue the delivery of the RIRG commitment for the enhancement and preservation of 100 roads and 100 bridges.
    - In 2023-24, \$15 million was paid to SARM through the RIRG program.
    - Since the 100 roads and 100 bridges target was announced in 2020, 131 road projects and 72 bridges have been completed.
  - Deliver alternate truck route partnerships to optimize the utilization of existing infrastructure.
    - The ministry had 30 alternate truck route agreements in 2023-24, which move secondary weight vehicles off of vulnerable highways to help maintain the condition of rural highways including thin membrane surface highways.
  - Work with rural municipalities and stakeholders to create new construction and maintenance partnerships to improve and sustain the network.
    - In 2023-24, the ministry had six active agreements to improve and preserve highways in Saskatchewan.
    - The ministry also provided funding for over-dimension agreements to create special corridors to accommodate over width/length/height vehicles. These are more common around large centres with tight intersections or overpasses.
    - In 2023-24 the ministry granted \$1.3 million for a partnership with municipalities and industry to support a significant expansion of the Moosomin airport.

- Invest \$6.6 million through the Urban Highway Connector Program to improve efficiency, connectivity, and the surface condition of roads through urban centres.
  - The ministry spent \$6.2 million combined on capital and operations and maintenance for urban connectors. Six capital projects, including four intersection rehabilitations were completed.
- Invest \$850,000 through the Community Airport Partnership (CAP) program to advance rehabilitation, construction, and capital investments in community airport infrastructure; and;
  - The CAP program invested in 21 projects across 19 communities for an investment of \$740,000. The CAP grants assisted in accomplishing more than \$1.5 million of work through this 50/50 cost-shared program.
  - The CAP program allows government to partner with municipalities and key stakeholders to ensure that a network of regional airports is in place to enhance economic development in sectors such as tourism, oil and gas, agriculture, and social development.
- Invest \$530,000 through the Short Line Railway Improvement Program to support the short line rail industry in maintaining and upgrading rail infrastructure.
  - The ministry granted \$530,000 across the province’s thirteen short line railways.

**Performance Measure Results:**

**Per cent of thin membrane surface highways managed using partnerships**

**Target = 16 per cent.**

- In 2023-24, 737 km (17.2 per cent) of TMS highway is in partnership with rural municipalities to divert traffic to the municipal system through the Strategic Partnership Program.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation and Maintenance Division*

This measure reflects the strategic partnerships that are assisting the ministry in maintaining reliable access. These partnerships with municipalities involve the utilization of municipal roads to re-route heavy vehicles that would otherwise damage sensitive segments of the provincial highway network.



## Progress on Goal 4: Efficient Travel for People and Goods

This goal focuses on regulatory harmonization and investing in major corridors so goods can move efficiently in and out of the province. Improving network mobility attracts and supports trade and investment in Saskatchewan communities. The ministry invests in a multi-modal network that meets the needs of travelers and businesses across Canada. We work with stakeholders, community partners, and other jurisdictions to provide safe, reliable, and efficient movement of goods and people for the resilience of local economies.

### **Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Ensure the safe and reliable flow of goods and people by efficiently managing a multi-modal transportation system.

### **Key Actions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Deliver the Transportation Partnership Program to contribute to the commercial vehicle efficiency of partnering companies shipping goods to or from their Saskatchewan facilities.
  - In 2023-24, the Transportation Partnership Program entered into 4 new agreements and renewed 16 agreements for a total of 80 active agreements across all program types.
- Invest in capital upgrades at ministry airports to improve access and safety, including planning for future projects to be delivered through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
  - In 2023-24, the ministry invested \$0.9 million in capital improvements for airports including runway improvements at Sandy Bay.
  - Five Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) projects were successfully completed in Cumberland House, Sandy Bay, La Loche, Ile-a-la-Crosse and Pinehouse.
- Invest \$89.4 million to improve and maintain transportation infrastructure in northern Saskatchewan.
  - The ministry invested \$92 million in operations, maintenance and construction of northern roads and airports in 2023-24.

### **Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Identify and develop transportation options to improve Saskatchewan's competitiveness, by working proactively with the province's export and transportation sectors, other western provinces, the federal government, and the U.S.

### **Key Actions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Promote economic competitiveness by supporting a National Transportation Strategy and jurisdictional regulatory harmonization.

- Saskatchewan signed a Prairies Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the governments of Alberta and Manitoba on economic corridors. The three provinces will cooperate to:
  - Improve efficiency of inter-provincial highway and rail networks.
  - Encourage the federal government for infrastructure funding and national supply chain solutions.
  - Keep their economies competitive and grow capital investment.
  - Harmonize regulations to support businesses, industries, and shippers.
- The associated action plans are focused on capital infrastructure and regulatory harmonization priorities to support intra provincial economic corridors and regional planning opportunities.
- In 2023-24, the ministry started the review of Long Combination Vehicles (LCV) regulations with partners in the Western Vehicle Weight and Dimension work group with a focus on potential harmonization.
- Facilitate the efficient transportation of goods through trade corridors, including examining options to enhance north-south networks and to provide competitive alternatives and broader multi-modal access.
  - The ministry provided letters of support for four National Trade Corridor Fund (NTCF) applications under the supply-chain digitalization call for proposals.
  - The ministry collaborated across the government with other ministries through the Transportation Policy Steering Committee to develop and identify opportunities for provincial transportation enablers.
  - A Saskatchewan Trade Corridor Map was developed from a government wide collaboration on the prioritization of transportation investments. This map project is one of the ministry's guiding sources for input in the Western Premiers Commitment (WPC) and the Prairies MOU.
  - Work was accomplished on a draft report for the WPC on existing and future economic corridors and strategic infrastructure across Western Canadian jurisdictions (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon). A final report will provide recommendations to foster the development of robust and reliable transportation system.
  - Under the Prairies MOU between Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba a regional economic corridors profile has been developed. It will be used to identify specific projects to reduce bottlenecks and to unlock near-term economic opportunities across the three prairie provinces.

## **Performance Measure Results:**

### **Per cent availability of the highway network**

#### **Target = 99.99 per cent**

- In 2023-24, 99.9 per cent of the highway network was available to road users.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation Standards Branch*

This measure is used to determine highway network reliability. It is a measure of kilometres closed for various reasons, including extreme weather and collisions.

### **Per cent availability of provincially operated ferries**

#### **Target = 98 per cent.**

- For the year, the ferries were open 97.2 percent of the time.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation and Maintenance Division*

This measure shows the reliability of the 12 provincially operated ferries. It is a measure of scheduled availability against time lost.

### **Per availability of airport services at the provincially operated airports**

#### **Target = 98 per cent.**

- The airports were open and available for use 99.9 percent for the year.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Operation and Maintenance Division*

This measure shows the reliability of the 16 provincially operated airports. It is a measure of scheduled availability against time lost.

### **Per cent of single trip permits issued within 24 hours**

#### **Target = 98 per cent.**

- In 2023-24, 98.9 per cent of single trip permits were issued within 24 hours.

*Source: Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)*

Single trip permits are required for vehicle configurations that exceed vehicle weight and dimension regulations for a particular route. Permitting is offered to ensure efficient travel for commercial vehicles while protecting road infrastructure assets. This is a measure of the efficiency of the permitting system in serving industry.

## Progress on Goal 5: Commitment to Excellence

The ministry strives to be a high performing organization by being accountable, transparent, engaged, and having effective leadership, tools, and systems. Having engaged, healthy and skilled employees is instrumental to uphold the Government of Saskatchewan's core values and drives an adaptable and efficient organization. This will result in high-quality customer service, and processes that are continuously improving for a modern transportation system that supports Saskatchewan's economy and its citizens.

**Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Foster an accountable, solution-focused, and knowledgeable workforce by enhancing employee engagement and inclusion.

**Key Actions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Improve employee engagement and maintain corporate knowledge through learning and development activities.
  - In 2023-24 the ministry continued to deliver is leadership programming that assists operational staff in developing supervisory and management skills or administrative and technical staff in developing a leadership mindset and skills.
  - The ministry worked on renewing its learning and development SharePoint site to centralize and update training information and onboarding information. The new learning center serves as a centralized and accessible source of knowledge and support for new employees, covering a wide range of technical areas as well as administrative processes and functions.
- Continue work to enhance the ministry's inclusive and diverse workforce through increasing employment opportunities for indigenous people and other diversity groups.
  - The ministry continued to enhance the employment opportunities among indigenous people by attending and participating in indigenous career fairs and introducing the ministry career opportunities.
  - The ministry entered an agreement with Tokata HR Solutions to assist in attracting indigenous people to the ministry's employment opportunities.
  - The ministry continued its Indigenous Apprenticeship Program and Roving Crews initiative to increase employment opportunities for Indigenous people.
  - To bolster employee engagement, foster workplace culture, and promote shared experiences, the ministry continued online events aimed at fostering understanding and creating inclusive workplaces. These efforts

included the online meeting forum "Building Bridges," which covered topics such as Indigenous Economic Reconciliation, Neurodiversity in the Workplace and other Diversity and Inclusion topics.

**Strategy:** *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Promote and strengthen a citizen-centred organization with effective tools, processes and systems through continuous improvement and innovation.

**KeyActions:** *What we will do to get there*

- Continuously improve project delivery through engaging with stakeholders and working together to promote innovation, collaboration and solutions in the effective delivery and quality of construction projects.
  - The ministry worked with stakeholders through a Tri-Party Roadway Technical and Contracts sub-committee to advance construction policy and standards development.
  - With the consultation of stakeholders, the ministry updated the Construction Manual. The ministry's Construction Manual houses the ministry's policies, practices and procedures related to construction administration.
  - The ministry updated its Construction Administration tender documents and piloted them on four projects. Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the pilot documents.
- Provide citizens and industry with easy access to services and information through the ministry's Customer Service Centre (CSC) and the trucking inquiry line.
  - The CSC maintained its convenient and efficient channels for submitting inquiries, complaints, and vehicle damage claims, available both online and by phone. Each request receives a unique case number for citizens to track in real-time.
  - In 2023-24, the CSC handled 4,757 inquiries with the top four being signage, winter maintenance, summer maintenance and road construction.
  - The trucking inquiry line received 1,099 calls with all 100 per cent having their calls returned within 24 hours. Most calls related to weights and dimensions with the second most pertaining to hours of service.

## Performance Measure Results:

### **Customer satisfaction in their interaction with the ministry's Customer Service Centre**

- In 2023-24, customer feedback surveys had an overall satisfaction rate of 3 out of 5 (on a scale of 1 equaling very unsatisfied to 5 being very satisfied). Ease of access was rated at 3.5 out of 5 with timing satisfaction rated at 2.9 out of 5.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Communications and Customer Service Branch*

Citizen-centred service is the primary goal of the ministry's strategic direction. Delivering quality service to the people of Saskatchewan and assisting them to find the answers they are looking for is important. This is a measure of the CSC's interaction with people in the delivery of services.

### **Per cent employee engagement**

- The 2023-24 employee engagement survey result was 64 per cent.

*Source: Ministry of Highways, Program Support Branch*

Employee engagement is measured by a survey every two years. This is an important measure as it relates to advancing a value-based culture where employees are excited about and committed to their work delivering citizen-centred service.

# Financial Summary

In 2023-24, the ministry received \$776.1 million in appropriated funding on budget day and invested \$785.6 million. The ministry's expenditures were over its appropriation to manage Winter Maintenance, which received Special Warrant funding.

## Expense Summary

Ministry of Highways Vote 16 Expense Actuals	(in thousands of dollars)				Notes
	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Variance	
<b>Central Management and Services</b>	<b>16,536</b>	<b>17,361</b>	<b>17,273</b>	<b>88</b>	
Minister's Salary (Statutory)	53	56	54	2	
Executive Management	1,027	1,111	1,036	75	
Central Services	4,573	5,158	4,928	230	1
Accommodation Services	10,882	11,036	11,255	(219)	2
<b>Preservation of Transportation System</b>	<b>123,060</b>	<b>127,554</b>	<b>126,637</b>	<b>917</b>	
Surface Preservation	110,926	115,362	114,383	979	3
Regional Services	12,134	12,192	12,254	(62)	
<b>Transportation Planning and Policy</b>	<b>4,017</b>	<b>3,968</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>108</b>	1
<b>Infrastructure and Equipment Capital</b>	<b>410,143</b>	<b>422,291</b>	<b>415,194</b>	<b>7,097</b>	
Infrastructure Rehabilitation	125,482	209,399	167,466	41,933	4
Infrastructure Enhancement	255,269	196,761	221,057	(24,296)	5
Accommodations Capital	2,620	4,839	5,846	(1,007)	5
Transportation and Operating Equipment	18,599	8,111	16,520	(8,409)	6
Minor Capital	8,173	3,181	4,306	(1,125)	7
<b>Custom Work Activity</b>	<b>(149)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>(98)</b>	
<b>Operation of Transportation System</b>	<b>248,577</b>	<b>178,383</b>	<b>196,799</b>	<b>(18,416)</b>	
Winter Maintenance	66,273	42,237	58,969	(16,732)	8
Road Safety and Traffic Guidance	25,879	30,462	29,912	550	9
Operational Services	56,478	92,905	95,479	(2,574)	10
Ferry Services	3,340	3,807	3,547	260	11
Airports	2,257	1,972	2,585	(613)	8
Information Technology Services	5,751	6,100	6,006	94	
Remediation of Contaminated Sites	88,600	900	301	599	12
<b>Strategic Municipal Infrastructure</b>	<b>30,957</b>	<b>26,497</b>	<b>25,731</b>	<b>766</b>	
Rural Integrated Roads for Growth	20,933	15,000	14,925	75	
Strategic Partnership Program	2,416	3,490	3,379	111	13
Urban Connectors	6,425	6,627	6,157	470	14
Community Airport Partnership Program	654	850	740	110	14
Short Line Railway Improvement Program	530	530	530	-	
<b>Subtotal (Appropriation)</b>	<b>833,140</b>	<b>776,054</b>	<b>785,592</b>	<b>(9,538)</b>	
<b>Special Warrant</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,400</b>	15
<b>Subtotal (Appropriation)</b>	<b>833,140</b>	<b>799,454</b>	<b>785,592</b>	<b>13,862</b>	
<b>Asset Retirement Obligations</b>	<b>(4,900)</b>				
<b>Remediation of Contaminated Sites</b>	<b>(88,600)</b>				
<b>P3 Financing Charges Adjusted to Opening Accumulated Deficit</b>		<b>(28,747)</b>	<b>(28,747)</b>		
<b>Capital Asset Acquisitions</b>	<b>(405,243)</b>	<b>(422,291)</b>	<b>(415,194)</b>	<b>(7,097)</b>	
<b>Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment</b>	<b>245,332</b>	<b>270,996</b>	<b>258,991</b>	<b>12,005</b>	
<b>Total Ministry Expense</b>	<b>579,730</b>	<b>619,412</b>	<b>600,642</b>	<b>18,770</b>	

## Notes:

1. Decrease due to FTE management and other administrative savings.
2. Increase related to space occupancy and recovery rates.
3. Decrease due to planned crushing work not completed.
4. Decrease due to capital projects not completed and carried over to next fiscal year.
5. Increase due to capital projects completed.
6. Increase due to purchase of fleet equipment.
7. Increase due to additional salt storage facilities, yard improvements, and intelligent transportation system improvements.
8. Winter maintenance costs exceeded budgeted levels.
9. Decrease in various road costs including right of way and drainage maintenance.
10. Increase due to costs for traffic studies, planning, training, meeting, and safety expenses.
11. Decrease due to mechanical work carried over.
12. Decrease due to new space not completed and contingent cost not being required.
13. Decrease due to partnership funding not required.
14. Decrease due to projects not completed.
15. Special Warrant funding of \$23.4 M for Winter Maintenance.

## Revenue Summary

Ministry of Highways Revenue	(in thousands of dollars)			Notes
	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Actuals	Variance	
<b>Sales, Services and Service Fees</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Transfers from Federal Government</b>	<b>17,189</b>	<b>22,907</b>	<b>5,718</b>	
National Trade Corridors Fund	6,000	15,697	<b>9,697</b>	<b>2</b>
Provincial Territorial Infrastructure	4,538	2,968	<b>(1,570)</b>	<b>3</b>
Airport Capital Assistance Program	-	(84)	<b>(84)</b>	<b>4</b>
Disaster Mitigation & Adaptation Fund	4,186	1,450	<b>(2,736)</b>	<b>5</b>
Other Federal Programs	2,465	2,876	<b>411</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Transfers from Government Entities</b>	<b>2,952</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>(1,386)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,451</b>	<b>24,967</b>	<b>4,516</b>	

## Notes:

1. Increase related to land sales and municipal title cost recoveries.
2. Increase for an agreement and work completed on the Highway 6 and 39 improvements.
3. Completed less work on projects than planned in 2023-24.
4. Amounts previously over recognized.
5. Revised project estimates and work carried over to future years.
6. Completion of Automated Weather Observation Systems.



7. There was a decrease in planned Transportation Partnership Funds utilized and transferred to the ministry offset with an increase for the Highway 17 cost share agreement with Alberta.

## Transportation Partnerships Fund

The Transportation Partnerships Fund (TPF) was established effective July 1, 1997, pursuant to Section 8 of *The Highways and Transportation Act, 1997*. The purpose of the fund is to generate revenues to be used for highway improvement projects. The TPF generates revenues subject to the terms of trucking partnership agreements, in which the transportation companies pay the TPF a portion of cost savings achieved from being able to haul overweight and/or over-dimension loads. Additional revenues are raised through issuing permits and the marketing of transportation related technology and expertise.

The ministry is responsible for managing the TPF. The ministry's Transportation Partnership Program generated \$2.6 million in revenue and invested \$0.6 million on transportation system improvements in 2023-24. The TPF balance was \$14.5 million on March 31, 2024.

## Loan Disclosure

The ministry administers the Shortline Railway Financial Assistance Program. Under this program, the province provided municipalities or local community groups that wanted to preserve rail service in their area with an interest free loan for the capital acquisition of rail infrastructure which was being abandoned. The loan is repayable over 15 years, with a discretionary three-year grace period.

Eight loans were advanced through this program:

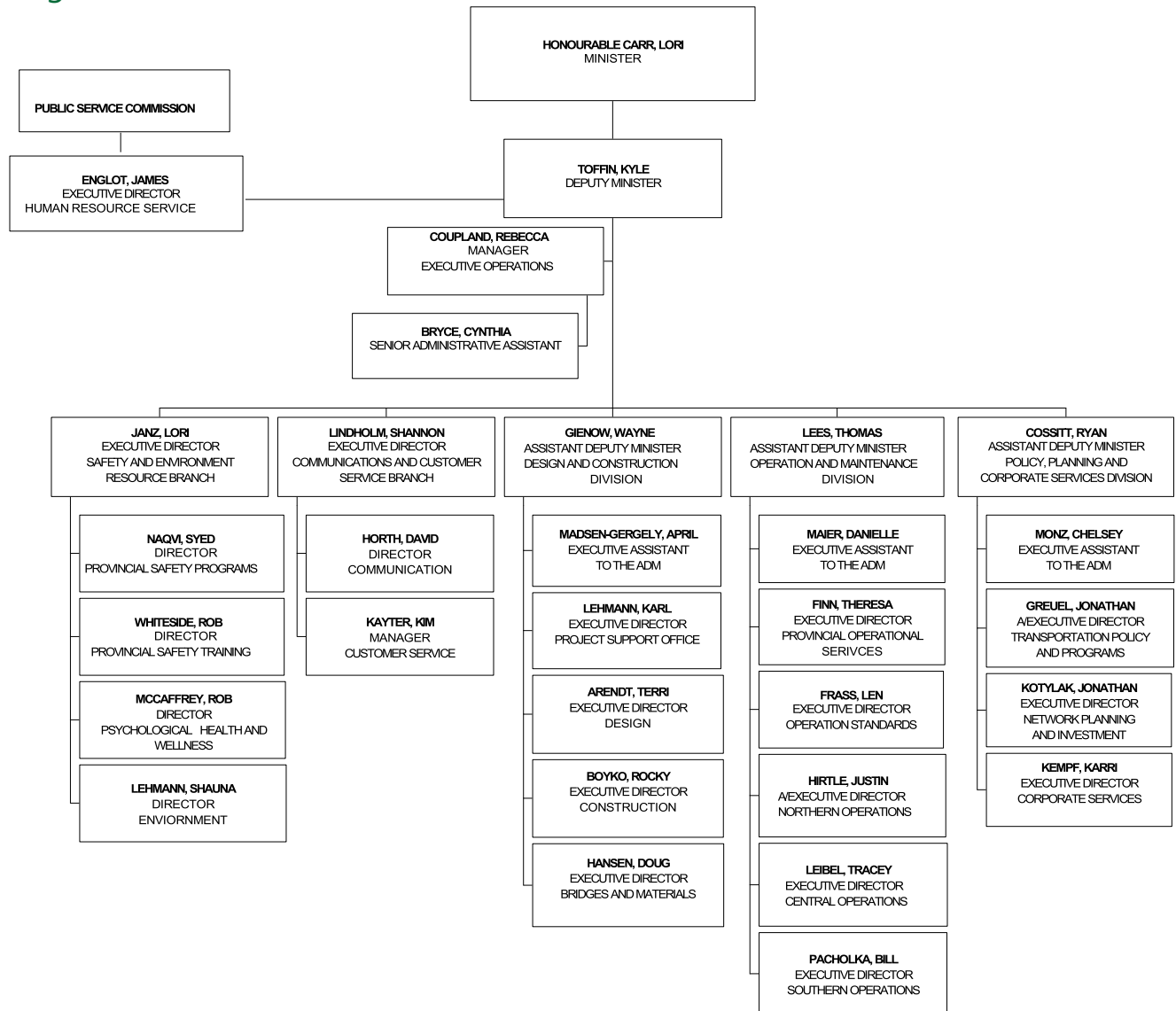
- In 1999-2000, investors received a \$177,000 provincial loan and a \$177,000 Canada Agriculture Infrastructure Program (CAIP) grant.
- From 2004-2012 investors received six loans totaling \$6.6 million with funding split equally between the TPF and the General Revenue Fund (GRF).
- In 2015-2016 investors received a loan in the amount of \$551,000 with all funding coming from the TPF.

There are two loans outstanding for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

This loan program supported the ministry's objective to invest in multi-modal infrastructure, such as short line rail. A short line railway reduces truck traffic since agricultural products are hauled long distances by rail, rather than by large trucks on the provincial highway system. Reducing the amount of heavy truck traffic helps the ministry sustain the condition of rural TMS highways.

Short Line Railway Loans	TPF	GRF	Total
	2023-24	2023-24	
	Actual	Actual	
Beginning Balance	489	168	657
Additions	-	-	-
Reductions	147	101	248
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>409</b>

## Organizational Chart as of March 31, 2024



Additional financial information can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan Public Accounts located at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/893>