



Strategic Outlook

*for
the* 40th Parliament



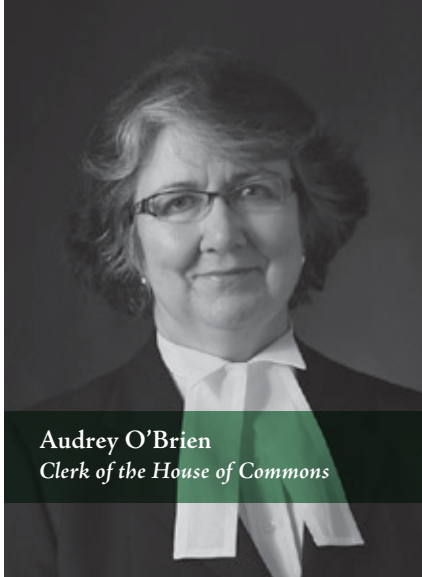
HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES

House of Commons Administration

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Audrey O'Brien
Clerk of the House of Commons

Message from the Clerk

Respect for continuity and tradition and a capacity to respond to new challenges are characteristics that define Canadian parliamentary democracy and they are the traits that form the foundation of the House of Commons *Strategic Outlook for the 40th Parliament*.

In referring to the House of Commons, Canadians usually mean the lower House of the bicameral Parliament of Canada, the deliberative assembly to which 308 Members of Parliament are elected to represent constituencies across the country. This document looks at the House of Commons from an entirely different perspective: the reader will find here a look at the House as an institution and see the infrastructure that underpins the work of that assembly and supports 308 MPs in their various roles. The House of Commons Administration must support the work of MPs in two ways: as they act collectively—in the Chamber and in committees; or as each Member acts individually—as the representative of a constituency and as a member of a caucus or an independent MP.

The *Strategic Outlook* examines the institutional support that will be given to the MPs of the 40th Parliament. It sets out the long-term, strategic objectives for the House of Commons as an institution and identifies the major initiatives that the Administration of the House has undertaken to achieve them. We are building on similar work done

for earlier Parliaments for there are certain fundamental strategic objectives that remain relevant and appropriate for a deliberative assembly like the House. But in this Outlook, we focus on establishing links between the projects and activities we invest in and the strategic objectives we want to attain.

Thus, the *Strategic Outlook for the 40th Parliament* articulates our mandate as well as our collective vision and the values we hold. Then, it identifies the projects and activities that will be carried out by the six service areas of the House headed by the members of the senior management group I chair as we carry out the Administration's mandate under the direction of the Board of Internal Economy and its Chair, the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The 40th Parliament will no doubt present both new challenges to be met and new avenues to strengthen this institution. I am proud to lead the team here, and I am confident that all House Administration employees strive to carry out their responsibilities in the highest tradition of parliamentary service. On behalf of all employees of the House Administration, I welcome this opportunity to inform Canadians about our work to sustain the institution and support their Members of Parliament.

Audrey O'Brien
Clerk of the House of Commons

Our Mandate

We proudly support Members of the House of Commons, providing them with the services, infrastructure and advice they need to carry out their work as legislators and representatives in the Chamber, in committees, in caucus and in their offices, both on Parliament Hill and in their constituencies.

Our Vision and Values

We are guided by a core vision and values—striving always for excellence to provide effective non-partisan support to Members and to act as responsible stewards of the institution.

Vision

The vision of the House Administration is to exercise leadership in supporting the House of Commons and its Members, and in the advancement of parliamentary institutions.

Values

The employees of the House Administration are proud to serve the Parliament of Canada. We are guided by values that motivate us to provide excellent service and non-partisan expert advice to Members. These values are the following:

Respect for the democratic process — We believe in the importance of parliamentary institutions and the democratic process, and we work to strengthen and foster respect for them.

Balancing continuity and change — We preserve the collective memory and ensure institutional continuity, while supporting

Members as their roles evolve and the institution evolves with them.

Professional excellence — We work together to provide effective, accountable and non-partisan support, and we act with integrity in a manner that is responsible and ethical.

Governing the House of Commons Administration

The Board of Internal Economy governs the House Administration. Chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons and composed of Members representing all recognized political parties, the Board is responsible for all matters of financial and administrative policy affecting the House of Commons.

The Clerk of the House of Commons is the Secretary of the Board and, as the senior official of the House Administration, reports to the Speaker.

Six Service Areas

Drawing on the professional support of its employees, the House Administration has six service areas:

- ✦ Procedural Services;
- ✦ Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel;
- ✦ Information Services;
- ✦ Parliamentary Precinct Services;
- ✦ Finance Services; and
- ✦ Human Resources, Corporate Planning and Communications Services.

Strategic Objectives

Four strategic objectives will guide the activities of the House Administration during the 40th Parliament, providing a framework for its activities in support of Members.

Major Initiatives

In support of its four strategic objectives, the House Administration has identified a series of major initiatives.

To respond to the evolving role of Members and the institution

- Supporting the evolution of parliamentary practices and rules
- Improving Members' access to parliamentary information
- Facilitating the involvement and awareness of Canadians about their Parliament and the parliamentary process

To enhance ongoing services to Members and sustain the institution

- Advancing the long-term vision and plan to rehabilitate heritage buildings and grounds, and provide additional parliamentary accommodations
- Providing a flexible technology infrastructure to respond to the needs of Members and the institution
- Ensuring the guardianship of the institution

To promote understanding and support the advancement of legislative institutions

- Ensuring the availability of up-to-date information on parliamentary procedure
- Providing learning opportunities for parliamentarians and legislative officials from jurisdictions in Canada and abroad
- Increasing public awareness and sustaining the independence and traditions of the House of Commons

To apply the highest standards of public sector governance in a parliamentary context

- Promoting strong stewardship and effective management of public resources
- Attracting, engaging and retaining our talent
- Strengthening environmental practices
- Supporting an integrated approach to information management

Strategic Objective 1

To respond to the evolving role of Members and the institution

Canadian parliamentary democracy is always evolving to respond to new challenges. The House of Commons Administration supports the efforts of all Members to meet these challenges by supporting the evolution of parliamentary practices and rules; and providing new, innovative ways to access parliamentary information.

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Supporting the evolution of parliamentary practices and rules

The procedures pertaining to proceedings in both the House and in committee are often changed to better suit the needs of Members. As further changes are proposed and implemented, the House Administration will provide advice and support on how best to proceed. The processes concerning the procedures for Private Members' Business, for example, will be an ongoing subject of attention. The on-line resource *Compendium of House of Commons Procedure* will be regularly updated to be an accurate reflection of current practices and usages.

Improving Members' access to parliamentary information

The administrations of the Senate, the House of Commons and the Library of Parliament continue to work together to identify opportunities for collaboration in the management and provision of information generated by the parliamentary process, including information on legislation. The objective continues to be an integrated, modern approach to the collection, management and sharing of parliamentary information.

PRISM is a House of Commons technology program for managing procedural information, publishing of parliamentary publications and

supporting the planning of parliamentary events. Representatives from the service areas of the House Administration currently using PRISM will work to establish business-led governance to support ongoing investments. In the coming year, consultations will be undertaken with users, and processes will be developed to initiate, review and approve projects, as well as to validate and deploy solutions. Within the updated PRISM framework, these solutions will facilitate the production of parliamentary publications and allow information to be retrieved in a more timely and efficient manner.

Work also will continue on the second phase of *Smart Book*, a software tool to help publish both hard-copy and electronic documents and improve document workflow. The new version of this software will take full advantage of underlying technologies and will be used to manage and publish articles for the *Compendium of House of Commons Procedure*, making it easier to maintain and update this important on-line resource.

Facilitating the involvement and awareness Canadians have about their Parliament and the parliamentary process

New features are being developed as part of the ParlVU service—a media portal through which citizens can see and hear Parliament live and on demand, in both official languages. These

new features include: links to the transcripts of parliamentary proceedings; the ability to view proceedings using different mobile devices; a “power browser” with enhanced viewing features; and closed captioning services for Question Period.

Currently, real-time closed captioning of Question Period is offered in both official languages for the House of Commons Chamber proceedings. These services will be expanded in the future to include televised committee proceedings.

Just prior to the end of the 39th Parliament, enhancements were made to the committees' section of the website. The improvements provide Members, staff and the public better access to information regarding committee members and witnesses and also offers improved subscription features to allow users to follow the work of committees. Over the 40th Parliament, these new features will be increasingly utilized and will in turn permit further refinements to better serve parliamentarians and the public alike.



Strategic Objective 2

To enhance ongoing services to Members and sustain the institution

The House Administration continues to implement a series of initiatives to upgrade technology services and facilities, as well as to ensure their security and resiliency, so Members and employees can better serve Canadians.

Advancing the long-term vision and plan to rehabilitate heritage buildings and grounds, and provide additional parliamentary accommodations

The House Administration continues to work in collaboration with Public Works and Government Services Canada to meet the key objectives of the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the Parliamentary Precinct. This plan serves to ensure that Members and staff have safe, efficient facilities that meet the demands of a modern workplace while preserving and enhancing this important national heritage setting for all Canadians.

As part of the major rehabilitation of the West Block, work continues on providing alternative workspaces for the relocation of the West Block parliamentary functions and support services. West Block will be entirely vacated to allow major construction work to begin.

Alternative facilities will also be completed to vacate the Wellington Building to allow the major renovation work to begin on that building.

Masonry repairs and urgent building interventions will continue in the Parliamentary Precinct to ensure the preservation of these heritage assets.

The House Administration continues to play a lead role in overseeing the planning, design and implementation of technology services and information technology and information management infrastructure for the renovation and relocation of parliamentary functions and administrative services into new and renovated facilities.

The Parliamentary Precinct Network was recently upgraded, providing a new standard network platform that will deliver information services to new buildings and facilities.

Providing a flexible technology infrastructure to respond to the needs of Members and the institution

To deal with a steadily evolving environment, the House Administration is building continuously on its information technology security framework. Work is continuing with partners to review the requirements for video-conferencing services for use in parliamentary committees. Other technology based initiatives that will be undertaken include:

- ♦ initiating a replacement for the security scheduling system, while ensuring alignment with the human resources management system used throughout the House Administration;
- ♦ developing an on-line purchasing tool that is integrated with the House Administration's financial system to allow Members to purchase supplies on-line and to have their financial information updated simultaneously;

- ♦ developing and implementing a sustainable telecommunications information management system to manage client requests, ensuring better tracking and more efficient resolution; and
- ♦ developing a new information system for the management of food production and enhancement of food quality and control.

Ensuring the guardianship of the institution

A partnership of security representatives from the Senate, the House of Commons and the RCMP provides strategic orientation on security issues to ensure collaboration on both day-to-day services and the planning of the security requirements as part of the Long-Term Vision and Plan. As part of its Master Security Plan, an Incident Command System for emergency response will be implemented. A Precinct Access Office will be created as a centralized point of management for access requests for all Precinct buildings and for meeting rooms reserved for parliamentarians.

As part of the ongoing planning for the Business Continuity Program, the business continuity plans for the essential functions of the House of Commons will be refined and tested to ensure that the operations can continue in the event of an emergency situation that requires relocation.

Strategic Objective 3

To promote understanding and support the advancement of legislative institutions

To ensure a broader understanding of Parliament by Canadians, including representatives of professional and academic organizations, the House Administration is working on outreach and communication activities.



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Ensuring the availability of up-to-date information on parliamentary procedure

Work is underway on the final stages of the production of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. Originally published in 2000, this book is a comprehensive study of the House of Commons jurisprudence that examines the forms, customs and procedures established since Confederation. This new edition, to be published in the Fall 2009, will take into account changes to the Standing Orders and practices of the House since the release of the first edition and will include a number of revised chapters, new graphics, and a more complete bibliography.

Providing learning opportunities for parliamentarians and legislative officials from jurisdictions in Canada and abroad

Training sessions on parliamentary procedure will be offered to Members and their staff, caucus research staff, House Administration employees

and other interested parties. To provide access to staff working in MPs constituency offices, the possibility of delivering these sessions through an electronic medium such as webcasting will be explored.

The House of Commons regularly responds to international parliamentarians and staff interested in learning more about our parliamentary system. In response to such requests, the House will continue to welcome official Speaker-led delegations from other parliaments as well as organizing meetings, seminars and conferences related to the various parliamentary associations to which the Parliament of Canada belongs. In addition, the House, along with its partners—the Senate and the Library of Parliament—will continue to offer its Parliamentary Officers' Study Program for officials from other legislatures wishing to learn more about the procedural and administrative practices in place in Canada.

Building on an assessment of the program, improvements will be made to the Members' Orientation and Election Readiness Program to continue to ensure that the House Administration supports Members during election periods.

Increasing public awareness and sustaining the independence and traditions of the House of Commons

The House Administration will undertake a review of the content of its procedural publications and the processes used to produce them. To offer the most accurate and timely procedural information to Members, efforts will focus on reducing duplication and developing a "living documents" strategy so that key products can be updated on a regular basis. For example, staff will regularly update the *Compendium of House of Commons Procedure*, so that it contains the current changes to practices and usages in the House as procedures continue to evolve.

As communication is key to increasing awareness, a comprehensive communication strategy will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders from across the organization and with external partners. The main objective of the strategy will be to facilitate a coordinated approach to raising awareness and sustaining the independence and traditions of the House of Commons.



Strategic Objective 4

To apply the highest standards of public sector governance in a parliamentary context

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure accountability and transparency, the House Administration is implementing a range of management processes and best practices that promote responsible stewardship of resources.

Promoting strong stewardship and effective management of public resources

The House Administration is implementing a more strategic approach to financial management, known as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) model in order to put increased emphasis on the strong stewardship of public resources, and to meet fiduciary responsibilities through sound financial management practices. This is a corporate responsibility that must be supported by core disciplines including planning and resource management; performance management; financial accounting and reporting; risk management and internal control; as well as policy development.

The following initiatives are underway:

Planning and Resource Management/ Performance Management

The strategic planning framework's effectiveness is being increased by adopting additional best practices and better integrating corporate planning with other planning cycles, including a new integrated investment planning framework. The integrated investment planning framework includes a five-year capital investment plan to support efficient investment and stewardship of House of Commons' assets and infrastructure.

Specific performance monitoring and reporting practices will be developed and established. Some standards and measures are being implemented to ensure the delivery of highly reliable, consistent financial and human resources advice and information.

Financial Management and Reporting/ Risk Management and Internal Control

A quality assurance framework in the areas of Finance, Materiel Management, Procurement and Information Management is being developed. This framework will ensure that practices continue to be in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, House of Commons' policies and procedures and requirements for reporting of financial information.

Policy Development

An integrated policy framework is being developed that includes financial and materiel management policies and guidelines to make certain that the most appropriate controls, and risk and financial management practices are in place to meet our fiduciary responsibilities in line with evolving situations and best practices.

Attracting, engaging and retaining our talent

The House of Commons, like many employers, will be facing challenges in recruitment over the coming years due to changing demographics in the Canadian workforce, as retirements are projected to increase and the market for skilled employees becomes highly competitive. To address these challenges, the House Administration will implement a recently developed corporate human resources strategy with the goal to recruit, engage, develop and retain top talent to support the work of Members and to ensure that the House of Commons is regarded as a best employer in a competitive marketplace.

An integral part of the human resources strategy will be to provide performance statistics to measure the success of the initiatives in the areas of retention and employee satisfaction. As part of its goal of managing talent, the strategy includes the formation of a learning and management development program, a strategic recruitment plan, and the creation of an employer brand to enhance the recruitment and retention of our key asset—the staff of the House Administration.

Strengthening environmental practices

The Senate, the House of Commons, the Library of Parliament and Public Works and Government Services Canada – Parliamentary Precinct Branch have partnered for the environmental management of Parliament Hill under a program entitled "Partners for a Green Hill—Preserving our Past, Protecting our Future". This program represents a commitment to preserve and enhance the Parliament Hill environment by implementing the "4Rs" of environmental protection—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink.

An implementation plan will be developed to expand the use of 100% EcoLogo-certified recycled paper for most of the House Administration's printing products.

In the planning and implementation of various projects of the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the Parliamentary Precinct, the House of Commons will strive to harmonize functions to consolidate facilities, adopt solutions that are environmentally friendly and meet the highest possible targets for green building and sustainable development.

Supporting an integrated approach to information management

Building on its Strategic Blueprint and Guiding Principles for Information Management (IM), the House Administration will continue to develop the foundation for enhanced IM practices, collaboration and information-sharing. Efforts will include the areas of information custodianship and quality management, document and records

management, enterprise search and the use of portal technologies.

A records management strategy is being developed to support the consistent and collaborative approach to managing paper and electronic documents. This will entail developing tools, guidelines, retention schedules, knowledge management tools, disposal plans and evaluation mechanisms, all of which will facilitate access and sharing of information. In addition, a collaboration tool (known as “Symphonie”) will be tested

with users, to support IM practices and policies as well as collaborative work.

The “LegalIMS” information management system is a website application that is used to track, share and store information pertaining to legal requests. Enhancements will be made to this application which will result in a standard and consistent business process for entering information related to requests for all types of legal services.

Moving Forward

The initiatives outlined in this *Strategic Outlook* demonstrate the House Administration’s ongoing commitment to support the Members of the House of Commons and to sustain the House of Commons as an institution.

Through an ongoing emphasis on service delivery, the House Administration will continue to develop new tools and innovative ways to work. It will also anticipate future needs, leverage technology to its fullest potential, and maintain good governance and sound stewardship of resources.

With the support House Administration provides to Members in their different roles—in the Chamber, in committees, in caucus and in their constituencies, Members will continue to serve Canadians well, taking their place in the proud history of the House of Commons.

A graphic representation of the various strategic elements, and their interaction is featured in this document and is found on the following page—Strategic Framework.



MANDATE

To support Members of the House of Commons, providing them with the services, infrastructure and advice they need to carry out their work as legislators and representatives in the Chamber, in committee, in caucus and in their offices, both on Parliament Hill and in their constituencies.

VISION

To exercise leadership in supporting the House of Commons and its Members and in the advancement of parliamentary institutions

VALUES

Respect for the democratic process
Balancing continuity and change
Professional excellence

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

CLERK'S MANAGEMENT GROUP

SERVICE AREAS

- Procedural Services
- Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel
- Information Services
- Parliamentary Precinct Services
- Finance Services
- Human Resources, Corporate Planning and Communications Services

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

REPORT TO CANADIANS

Annual summary of Members' parliamentary activities and update on the Administration's results and commitments in support of Members and the institution

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR THE 40TH PARLIAMENT

The Administration's strategic objectives to support Members and sustain the institution:

- To respond to the evolving role of Members and the institution
- To enhance ongoing services to Members and to sustain the institution
- To promote understanding and to support the advancement of legislative institutions
- To apply the highest standards of public sector governance, in a parliamentary context

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

An outline of how the House Administration supports Members, sustains the institution, and reports against its key objectives