



United Way
Saint John, Kings
& Charlotte

April 9, 2018

Mayor Darling and Members of Common Council

As Canada's first incorporated City, Saint John has many opportunities and challenges. One of our greatest assets is the collaborative nature of our people. We have seen evidence that when unusual partners come together we can achieve measureable improvements. In the late 1990's Saint John's poverty rate was over 26%, it now hovers near 20%. While we were pleased with this progress, we saw child poverty rates did not follow the same positive trend and re aligned our efforts to tackle generational poverty. These efforts and have seen literacy rates increase dramatically in the last year among our most vulnerable children.

I share this example to illustrate our track record. We know how to identify a community priority by engaging stakeholders (many who had not before been engaged in the issue), establishing a plan and clear metrics, revisiting our plan to ensure optimal impact, and our long term commitment to results. In other words, Saint John is well positioned to successfully tackle tough issues.

It is my pleasure to support the City of Saint John's application for the Government of Canada's Smart Cities Challenge.

We have another broad community challenge; Saint John was the only city in the country to lose population in the 2016 census. This phenomenon is not unique to Saint John but a pervasive trend in Atlantic Canada and the prairies, in particular. Many stakeholders from community organizations, public sector, tech sector, newcomer organizations and newcomers to Saint John themselves have come together to develop this important Challenge Statement and the application. Without population growth our economy and communities will not thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy MacDermott', written in a cursive style.

Wendy MacDermott

Executive Director

United Way Saint John, Charlotte, Kings