



*Gander-New-Wes-Valley
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat, Executive Council
Annual Activity Report 2007-08*



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2007-08 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results achieved.

This past year has been a year of growth for the Council. We continued to refine our regional vision and examine our regional priorities. We renewed and expanded our community engagement so as to focus on our vision document and the priorities we have identified. We are extremely pleased with the responses we received from the community sessions to date. We are grateful for the willingness of so many individuals to engage and participate with us in these sessions.

We have been encouraged by the many examples of both collaborative and cooperative initiatives occurring at the community level. We believe such initiatives will not only contribute to a strong foundation on which to strengthen regional sustainability, but prove critical to a new climate for change, optimism and innovation.

I share a sense of pride with members of the Council for the progress we have made over the past year, and I look forward to another level of discussion and focus with them and our colleagues in the provincial government in the coming year. I am confident we will continue to explore and define key elements essential to sustaining a viable and vibrant region for the future.

Sincerely,



Edythe Goodridge, Chair
Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region of the Rural Secretariat spans from Terra Nova National Park in the east to Lewisporte in the west and includes a hundred plus coastal communities.

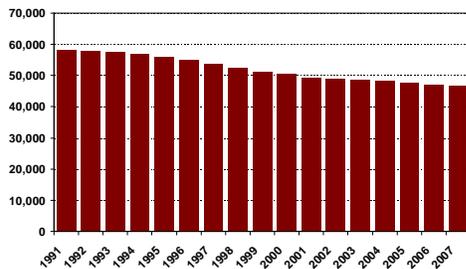
There are 38 incorporated municipalities, and 31 local service districts. The remaining communities have no local governance. Included within the region are three inhabited islands accessible only by ferry: St. Brendan’s, Change Islands and Fogo Island.

The geography of the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region is relatively small compared to other regions established by the Rural Secretariat. However, its complexity is extensive, due in large measure to the number of communities and municipalities, the transportation network and the locations of public and commercial services.



The Gander-New-Wes-Valley region was reported as having a population of about 46,600 in 2007. The region’s largest town and main regional service centre is Gander with a population of almost 10,000 in 2006. Gander is located in the centre of the region and is fed by a number of

Population Estimates
Gander-New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region

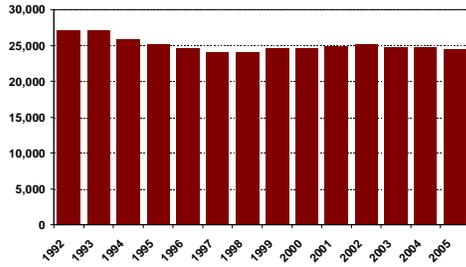


sub-regions. These sub-regions typically consist of a larger sub-regional centre surrounded by adjacent smaller communities. The flow of traffic and location of services are such that these sub-regional centres rarely connect with other such centres. Instead, they all feed into the larger regional centre of Gander.

Additional regional demographic information can be found in *Regional Demographic Profiles: Newfoundland and Labrador*

(www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population/regionaldemographicprofiles.asp).

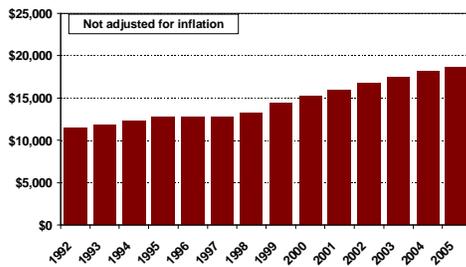
**Employed and Self-Employed
Gander-New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat
Region**



The region's labour market has stabled over the past 14 years. The number of persons employed (including self-employed) averaged about 25,100 between 1992 and 2005.

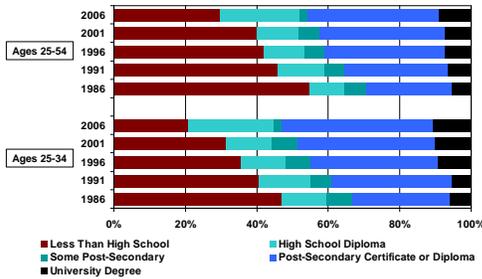
While employment has remained stable, incomes have increased. Per capita income in the region in 2005 was \$18,700. This is an increase of about 18% from 2001 and 47% from 1996.

**Per Income per Capita
Gander-New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat
Region**



Over this period, incomes have also been impacted by inflation and by changes to personal tax rates. Adjusting for these factors, after-inflation, after-tax personal income per capita in 2005 was about 9% higher than 2001 and 27% higher than 1996.

**Educational Attainment
Gander-New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region**



Formal educational attainment is increasing in the region. Among those of prime labour force age (ages 25-54), 35% had completed a college level program or university degree in 1991. By 2006, this rate had grown to 46%. Among younger workers (ages 25-34), the rate of post secondary completion grew from 39% to 53% over the same period.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.lmiworks.ca

2. Regional Council Overview

The Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of ten members; four female and six male, representing larger and smaller communities throughout the region.

Regional Council members	Community
Derm Flynn	Appleton
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Gail Hoyles	Gander
Ross Trimm	Clarkes Head
Douglas Churchill	Glovertown South
Nadine Decker	Joe Batt's Arm
Wander Loder	Pike's Arm
Edythe Goodridge	Salvage
David Regular	Summerford
Jim Snow	Lewisporte

* Additional members were appointed in September 2008. For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp>.

The Council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region to facilitate the work of the Regional Council and to establish information resources pertinent to their mandate. The planner for the Gander-New-Wes-Valley region is Tanya Noble. Tanya works out of Brookfield.

During the past year the Council held five meetings and one teleconference. Members also participated in the November 2007 Conference, *Visions to Action: Roadmap to 2020*. The Council's Provincial Council Representative or the Chairperson attended the Provincial Council Meetings. The Council's Chairperson also participated in a meeting with all Rural Secretariat Regional Council Chairs in September 2008.

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. Lines of Business

The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development.** The Rural Secretariat engages citizens and coordinates the development of partnerships to focus on sustainable regional development and provide direct consideration of regional issues in the development of public policy.
- **Regional Impact Awareness and Action.** The Rural Secretariat conducts research and analysis, and provides informed advice on opportunities and challenges in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5. *Values*

The core values explain the character of the organization. The Council supports the Rural Secretariat's core values, listed as follows:

Collaboration	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.
Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning Culture	Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. *Primary Clients*

The primary partners of the Gander–New-Wes-Valley Regional Council include the Provincial Government's Rural Secretariat, its Provincial Council, and departments and agencies.

The Gander–New-Wes-Valley Regional Council may also engage in discussion with individuals, groups and organizations within the region during the course of its investigation and identification of issues pertinent to its mandate.

7. *Vision*

The Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through its work, the Council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. *Mission*

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Council. It represents the key longer-term result that the Council will be striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the provincial government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The Council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat, as written in its 2007-08 Activity Plan, is as follows:

By 2011 the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have participated in annual forums and annual dialogue with Government and within regions that will show the value of two-way conversations between citizens and Government.

Based on its work in 2007-08, the Council modified its Mission Statement in its 2008-11 Activity Plan. The new Mission statement, while largely similar, focuses more broadly on community engagement processes. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

9. *Report on Performance*

In its 2007-08 Activity Plan the Council identified three goals. This section outlines each of these goals, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken by the Council to advance its achievement.

The Council's goals, objectives, measures and indicators for future years are identified in its Activity Plan for 2008-11. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

The activities and performance of the Council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the Council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The Council recognizes that these strategic directions are long term in nature and believes that its activities in 2008-09 and beyond will further support these directions.

GOAL 1: Vision

- 1. By March 31, 2008 the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for the sustainable development of the region.**

Measure:

Refinement of long-term regional vision for sustainable development

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
Completion of a working document that is shared with regions and government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft internal working document prepared in 2006-07• Discussions were held at Gander-New-Wes-Valley Council's meetings in 2007-08 around the vision document• Revisions completed to reflect discussions• Vision presented to Minister Taylor and posted to the web• Vision shared with stakeholders• A copy of the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Region's vision is available on the Rural Secretariat's website (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp#2)

GOAL 2: Regional Priorities

2. By March 31, 2008 the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have clarified regional priorities that have been identified as key elements in attaining the vision.

Measure:

Clarification of identified regional priorities

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed information and discussion related to identified regional priorities • Initiation of the development of a framework to further guide discussion within the community and government to advance regional priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council, in partnership with the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, initiated the development of a conceptual framework by which it could develop regional priorities. • Council identified a draft set of priorities in 2006-07. These priorities are consistent with the conceptual framework noted above. • Further refinement of Council’s priorities via discussions around the Council table and feedback through the engagement process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Municipal Governance” expanded to “Governance – Sub-regional”. Council examining sub-regional function in the future. For example, researching new models, examining the delivery of services, and discussing the role of municipalities, and other regional organizations. Council engaged municipal leaders on the challenges and opportunities municipalities will face in the future. ➤ Further work on the education priority through engagement of the Department of Education on post-secondary education ➤ Initial Council discussions in the issues of infrastructure and tourism for the purposes of future engagements and incorporation into a future refined vision document • Discussed a policy framework to engage ministers

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed pilot sessions of previous year. Agreed to further engage around priorities and vision. Drafted letter, questions and identified stakeholders for future engagement. Engagement of departments and the MUN Harris Centre around priorities to gain a better understanding of the provincial government's priorities and research perspectives • These priorities are outlined in the Council's 2008-11 plan (www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp)

GOAL 3: Citizen Engagement

3. By March 31, 2008 the communications process initiated in December 2006 is broadened to more citizens.

Measure:

Communications engagement process is broadened

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of individuals or small groups within regions • Engagement of community groups, e.g., church groups, student councils, senior’s groups, etc. • Engagement of formal groups, e.g., health boards, school boards, economic development organizations, etc. • Engagement of mixed groups that include representation from community and formal groups, as well as individuals within regions who have participated in previous engagement sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The citizen engagement process was initiated in December 2006. Initial sessions held between December 2006 and March 2007 allowed for an orderly expansion of the process in 2007-08. • There were a total of 15 community engagement sessions including 74 participants. (It should be noted that some individuals may have attended more than one engagement session in 2006-07 and 2007-08.) • These included a mix of individuals, and community groups including municipalities, youth, seniors, private sector and economic development organizations • Sessions were run by Regional Planner, a Council Member, or Regional Planner with participation from Council members • Key results from the sessions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Broader understanding by individual and organizations of the role of the Rural Secretariat and the Regional Council in providing a citizen's voice for provincial public policy; ➤ Improved understanding by Council of key issues impacting the region, communities, organizations and individuals; ➤ Encouraged more integrated thinking and decision making for the future of the region;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individuals enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and debate the key issues impacting and the actions required to ensure long-term sustainability of the

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
	region; ➤ Support for the priority issues and opportunities identified by Council for long term regional sustainability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from the citizen engagement process informs the vision document and key priorities of the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from the sessions was used to refine the vision document and much of the discussion validated the Council's discussions The sessions were positive overall. Council members who participated were satisfied with the results

The Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will attempt to focus public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region, and to recommend policy and program positions for the provincial government to adopt. The Council has demonstrated through its performance in 2007-08, that it has advanced an open and transparent means for the discussion of rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions through its community engagement.

Through its efforts, the Council has brought together residents of the region to articulate and share their priorities, perspectives, information and knowledge. These engagements have to some extent, contributed to a new level of awareness of the issues confronting the region, and the urgent need for more collaboration and cooperation. We have also witnessed a change in attitudes, a confidence in dialogue, and more recognition of local and community leadership.

Council members have also engaged in strenuous debate, discussion and study among themselves and have hosted specific residents of the region, government officials, and university faculty at several of its regular meetings. The Council feels its performance in 2008-09 will be substantially influenced and strengthened by its collective investment and achievements in 2007-08.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is dictated and determined by its mandate, the opportunities and challenges faced by Council remain fairly similar from year to year. However, it is these very same opportunities and challenges which will guide the Council members in their work and provide the impetus and commitment necessary to advance their agenda over the course of this year.

Collaboration

Council defines collaboration as that spirit of willingness demonstrated by residents and community groups to engage in discussion and debate, to forge consensus and to form decisions which are in the best interest of the public good and maximize benefits for the majority of the general public. Without this form of collaboration, we cannot realise realize the social and political power of our collective will.

Thinking Long-Term

The exercise of long-term thinking about change is demanding for many people. The idea of addressing the need for change now, or in the future is daunting for all. It is therefore easier for us to reduce our discussion to minor corrections, adjustments or changes to today's problems. We can always devote some thought to major changes at some time in the future.

In the context of the work of the Council, we have attempted to stimulate long-term thinking in the hope of identifying a shared vision of regional goals. We have invested a great deal of time and effort to maintain an ability to discuss the changes and adjustments we believe are needed to correct current problems and impediments effecting the development of the social and economic stability. We hope to continue on this course.

Resident Engagement

Engagement by the Council with residents of the region has been a key activity to achieving a common vision for the region. We will continue to provide opportunities for residents to contribute to public policy development, and to encourage them to participate with Council members and provincial government decision-makers in both a purposeful and deliberate dialogue. The success of this process will hinge on the ability of residents to engage in discussion with us and each other in an open, informed and respectful manner.

Vision Development

Over the year the Council will expand on its working document to include additional issues deemed important to its vision for the sustainability of the region. It will remain focused on its long-term vision and will ensure the issues represent the perspectives and perceptions of its members and portray the full scope of the region's potential development of its rich social, economic, cultural and environmental resources.

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

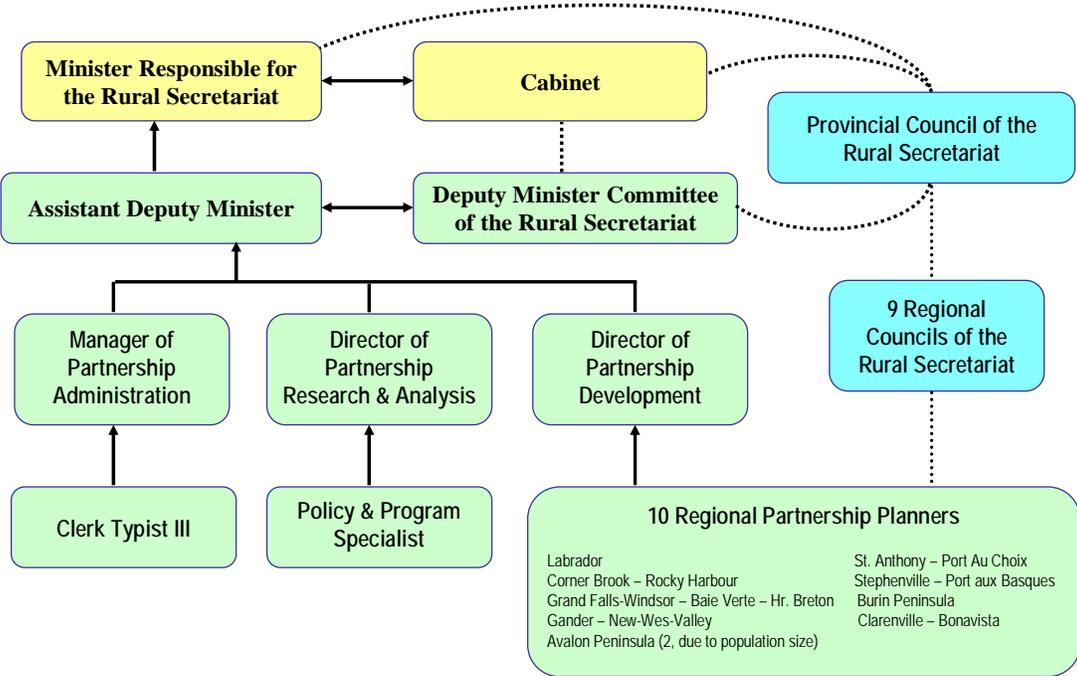
2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

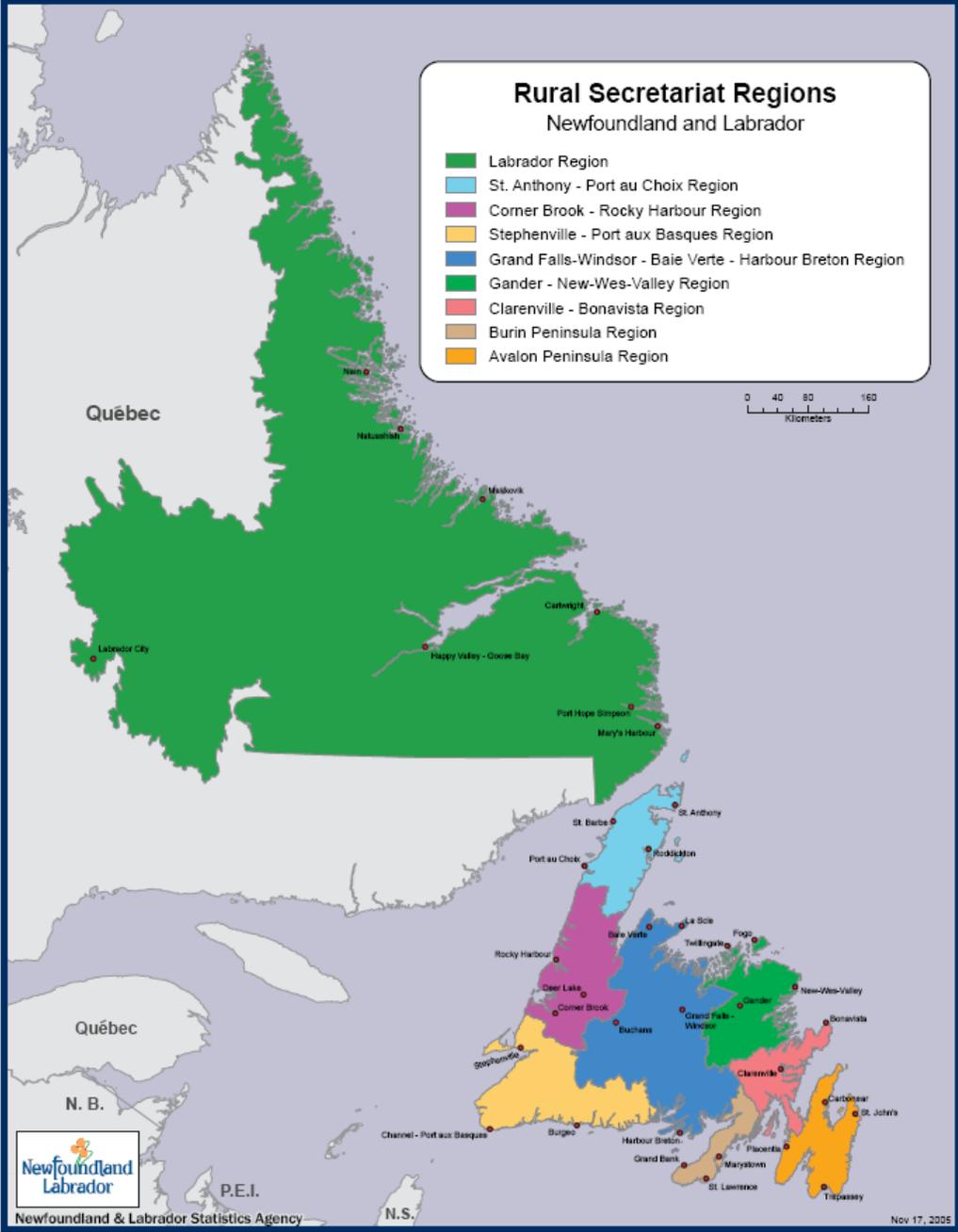
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy.

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C



Appendix D

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's Mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- Identify and advise government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

Photo Credit:



Change Islands
Photo Compliments of Lynn Pardy



Salvage Harbour
Photo Compliments of Maxine Stroud, Salvage



Fogo Island
Photo Compliments of Transportation & Works



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