



*Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte
– Harbour Breton Regional Council
of the Rural Secretariat,
Executive Council*

*Annual Activity Report
2006-07*



Message from the Chair



As Chairperson of Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat I am pleased to submit the 2006-07 Annual Activity Report. I sign this annual activity report on behalf of the council to show the council's accountability for the results achieved and any variances contained herein. The report has been prepared in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* and outlines the activities of the council from April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

Over the course of the past 12 months, council members reviewed the unique strengths and challenges of the region to prepare the articulation a vision for the year 2020. Besides identifying potential areas of economic growth, members also considered cultural implications, environmental sustainability and public services. From this analysis, three priorities were identified as having the greatest potential impact on regional sustainability.

Towards the end of the fiscal year, a community engagement process was initiated. Citizens were informed about key statistics, data and trends. People were able to share their knowledge, experience and ideas on regional sustainability.

Council members are reviewing each priority so as to understand better its effect from a regional perspective. This review is bringing to light practical advice. We hope this guidance will help government, communities and citizens to work together better.

By pulling together and sharing responsibility, what was once hard work will come easier.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Armstrong".

Debbie Armstrong

Chairperson

Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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Regional Council Overview

The Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council, known as Central West, of the Rural Secretariat is comprised of thirteen members; five female and five male. Members of the council have a variety of backgrounds that include social, economic, cultural and environmental expertise.

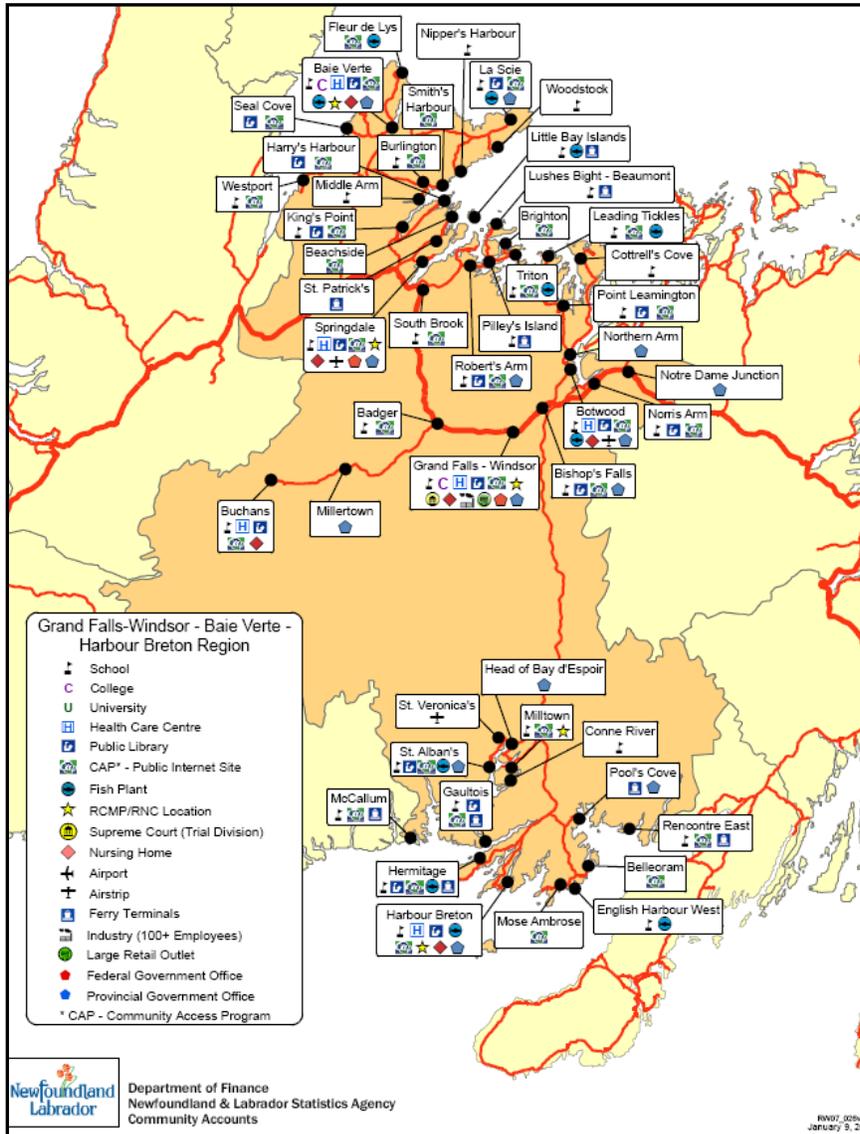
Council has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region:

Name	Community
Steward May	Belleoram
Jerry Dean	Botwood
Hubert Langdon	English Harbour West
Deborah Armstrong	Grand Falls-Windsor
Karen Beresford	Grand Falls-Windsor
Don Stewart	Harbour Breton
David Hayashida	King's Point
John Price	La Scie
Bernice Walker	Norris Arm
Danny Huxter	Springdale
Kevin Pollard	Springdale
Tracey Perry	St. Alban's
Joan Strickland	St. Alban's

**For an up-to-date listing of Regional Council members visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp>.*

The Council does not have a budget. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat. The Rural Secretariat also funds a staff position within the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and is responsible for the facilitation of the work of the council. The staff person for the region is Linda Brett who works from an office in Springdale <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/>.

Overview of the Region



The 2006 population of the Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat region is 49,708.¹ This is a decline of 8.0% from 1999 (compared with a decline of 4.5% for the province overall). The population is expected to drop to about 48,500 by 2011, a further decline of 2.4% (compared to decline of 1.7% for the province overall).

Population decline impacts all age groups and impacts on the size of the labour supply. The age 15-64 group (those of labour force age excluding seniors) is estimated at 34,492 in 2006, a decline of 8.5% from 1999. This age group is expected to fall by 4.3% to 2011, outpacing overall population decline. This difference can be attributed to continued out-migration from the region combined with fewer youth entering the labour market.

¹ The population data used is based information published by the Economics and Statistics Branch, February 2007.

Within the ages 15-64 age group, 20.7% are ages 55 to 64. This means, in broad terms, that about one in five individuals will exit the labour force over the next decade. This movement out of the labour force will create “replacement” demand for labour in the region for younger workers. While not all retiring workers will likely be replaced (i.e., firms will substitute investment in equipment and machinery for labour) there will be opportunities for youth in the region in the future, probably at higher wages rates as the labour market tightens.

While the population is declining, the labour market, measured in terms of the number of people with earned income, was fairly stable between 1999 and 2004, growing from 24,960 to 25,480 individuals.² After adjusting for inflation, the average earned income per worker employed grew by 1.9% over this period, less than provincial real growth of 9.0%. Growth in real personal income per capita over this period (11.7%) was higher than growth in real earned income but less than personal income growth for the province overall (15.2%). This trend means that personal income per capita in the region is diverging away from the provincial average, declining from 88.1% of the provincial average in 1999 to 85.4% in 2004.

Indicator	Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton	Percent of Province
Total Population		
1999	54,030	10.1%
2006	49,708	9.8%
2011	48,507	9.7%
Population Ages 15-64		
1999	37,701	10.0%
2006	34,492	9.5%
2011	32,998	9.4%
Population Ages 55-64 2006	7,144	10.3%
Number of People Employed		
1999	24,960	9.6%
2004	25,480	9.4%
Earned Income per Worker Employed		
1999 (\$2004)	\$20,900	86.0%
2004	\$21,300	80.4%
Personal Income per capita		
1999 (\$2004)	\$15,800	88.1%
2004	\$17,600	85.4%
Employment by Occupation		
Fishery (harvesting + processing)	2,740	11.7%
Primary activity (excl fish harvesting)	1,910	22.0%
Manufacturing (excl. fish processing)	1,095	12.1%
Construction	4,400	10.5%
Services sector (incl. public admin)	9,670	8.0%
Health and education services	2,305	8.8%
EI beneficiaries		
1999	12,760	12.4%
2005	12,610	12.6%
Educational Attainment Ages 18-64		
University Degree	2,305	6.0%
Post secondary/Trades certificate	9,905	9.1%
High school/some post secondary	6,825	8.8%
Not completed high school	14,200	12.7%

Source: Calculated from Community Accounts website and Economic Research and Analysis, Department of Finance (www.communityaccounts.ca, www.economics.gov.nl.ca)

In other words, while the population of the region is declining, the labour market is stable, but those that remain are not experiencing significant earned income growth.

² Employment and earned income data is based on taxfiler residency information, not place of work. For example, those working in Alberta but filing taxes in the Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat region would show as being employed and earning income in the Region.

Graph Source: Calculated from Community Accounts website and Economic Research and Analysis Department of Finance(www.communityaccounts.ca www.economics.gov.nl.ca)

On an occupational basis, the fishery (harvesting and processing) employed 2,740 in 2000, or about 12.4% of employment, in the region compared to 10% for the province overall.³ This meant that 11.7% of total fisheries related employment in the province, and 9.7% of the population, accrued to the region.

The overall occupational structure in the region is weighted toward goods producing seasonal industries. In 2000, the fishery, other primary activity and construction accounted for 40.9% of employment in the region, and 43.8% of EI beneficiaries in 2005. Overall, there were 12,610 EI beneficiaries in the region in 2005, or about one EI claim for every two people with earned income. The region accounted for 12.6% of total provincial EI beneficiaries in 2005 but 9.7% of the population.

The educational profile of workers in the region is generally aligned with the occupational structure. Just over 2,300 individuals between ages 18-64 (6.9%) had a university degree in 2000 compared with about 9,900 individuals with a trades or college level certificate (29.8%). Overall, therefore, 36.7% of individuals ages 18-64 in the region had completed post secondary studies. This compares to 43.6% for the province overall.

At the same time, 42.7% of this age group in the region have not graduated from high school. While many of these workers have acquired on-the-job skills, their earnings growth potential, and their ability to upgrade and transfer their existing skill sets, may be limited. There are some age specific differences of importance for this education level. For example, considering older workers only (those ages 55-64), 62.5% have not completed high school. Conversely, considering younger workers only (those ages 25-29), 25.6% fall in this category.

³ Occupational and educational attainment data is sourced from the 2001 Census. Data from the 2006 Census will not be available until 2008.

Mandate

The mandate of the Regional Council 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.

Highlights and Accomplishments

In the past fiscal year, the council has met 12 times (seven face-to-face meetings and five teleconference calls). During this term, council members have expanded their knowledge and understanding of regional sustainability; appreciating innovation for competitive business; researching statistical trends using Community Accounts website; considering sustainability through demographic data, private sector expansion, skills development, infrastructure needs, and the provision and funding of public services; and studying the processes and implications of policy development.

Council members conducted a SWAT analysis along with identifying linkages and innovative processes for industry sectors and public services. This investigation formed the base for Central West Regional Council's (CWRC) vision document.

This vision articulates how the region would look in the year 2020. In determining its unique strengths and challenges members considered scenarios that were realistic, sustainable, achievable, and affordable for government and citizens.

Significant aspects of the 2020 vision document and key issues that need to be addressed were shared through community engagement. Council members assisted in varying degrees. Some recommended and contacted individual citizens while others hosted or participated in the

sessions. All recognized the prospective merits of citizen engagement but some did express concern on this aspect of council work. Fifteen of the 24 community engagement sessions had council members' direct input.

In October, CWRC's chairperson and provincial council representative attended Dialogue Day 2006 at Fisherman's Landing Inn, Rocky Harbour. Attendees included ministers, deputy ministers, representatives of regional councils and provincial council members. This meeting served as the first Provincial Council meeting and provided a venue for all Regional Councils to present their predictions for 2020. Subsequently, CWRC sent a representative to the second provincial council meeting, thus building a relationship between the two councils.

In the past year, Regional Council members have come to understand the changing demographics of the region and the implications without involved and dramatic intervention. They realized that neither community nor government can act alone. A collaborative approach is the most desirable. Planning and managing change requires input from all levels of government and citizens. It is a slow but critical process. They acknowledged the province is in a transitional state but want to have a positive influence on that change. Lastly, there is a strong desire to negotiate common issues between larger and smaller communities to achieve the goal of regional sustainability.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The mandate of the Rural Secretariat is focused on long term planning, government working together with people. Considerable time and organization is required to establish an effective environment to instill this level of collaboration and trust. Last year, during the formation of the Regional Council, the concepts of collaboration, long term thinking, citizen engagement and vision development were initiated. In comparison this fiscal year, Central West Regional Council has demonstrated the fruits of this collective effort. Through the citizen engagement process we, along with community members, have openly discussed the advantages and barriers of regional sustainability. We anticipate that the opportunities and challenges outlined below will continue to require deliberation for the year to come.

Collaboration

Collaboration, as the council defines it, requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to make decisions that will maximize benefits for the whole and not just a piece of the whole. This kind of collaboration provides opportunities and benefits that would not otherwise be possible. It also poses a challenge for individuals to step out of their 'comfort zones' and look at issues differently.

Long-term thinking

Long-term thinking will continue to be both an opportunity and a challenge. Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the council, allows the council to set a shared goal for the region and to, collectively, define the steps required to achieve the goal. Thinking long-term will also be challenging for individuals and groups when there are immediate issues surfacing within regions.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens to directly influence public policy development. This citizen engagement process is a purposeful, deliberate process to engage citizens in a two-way conversation with government decision-makers. This process is not limited to the citizens that sit on the councils of the Rural Secretariat; rather there is a process for the broader citizenship to engage in a discussion about the future policy directions of government. The challenge will be to truly open our minds, listen to each other and discuss issues in a respectful manner.

Vision Development

The vision document that has been developed by the council is not intended to be a completed report, but rather the intention is for it to continue to be a working document. The vision document identifies what we want to see in 2020. As time advances, that time frame will be 2027-2032. As priorities are accomplished new priorities will be identified. External and internal factors will alter bringing forth new opportunities and different challenges. The vision document will be amended to absorb these changes. This will provide an opportunity for us to be informed about what is moving and changing in our regions, where the next opportunity will be and where the next challenge will be. It will also provide a challenge for all involved to have faith in the process and realize that it will take time until these priorities are accomplished. It takes time to make significant change and it is important for this council to remain focused on the future, even in the midst of immediate challenges.

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.

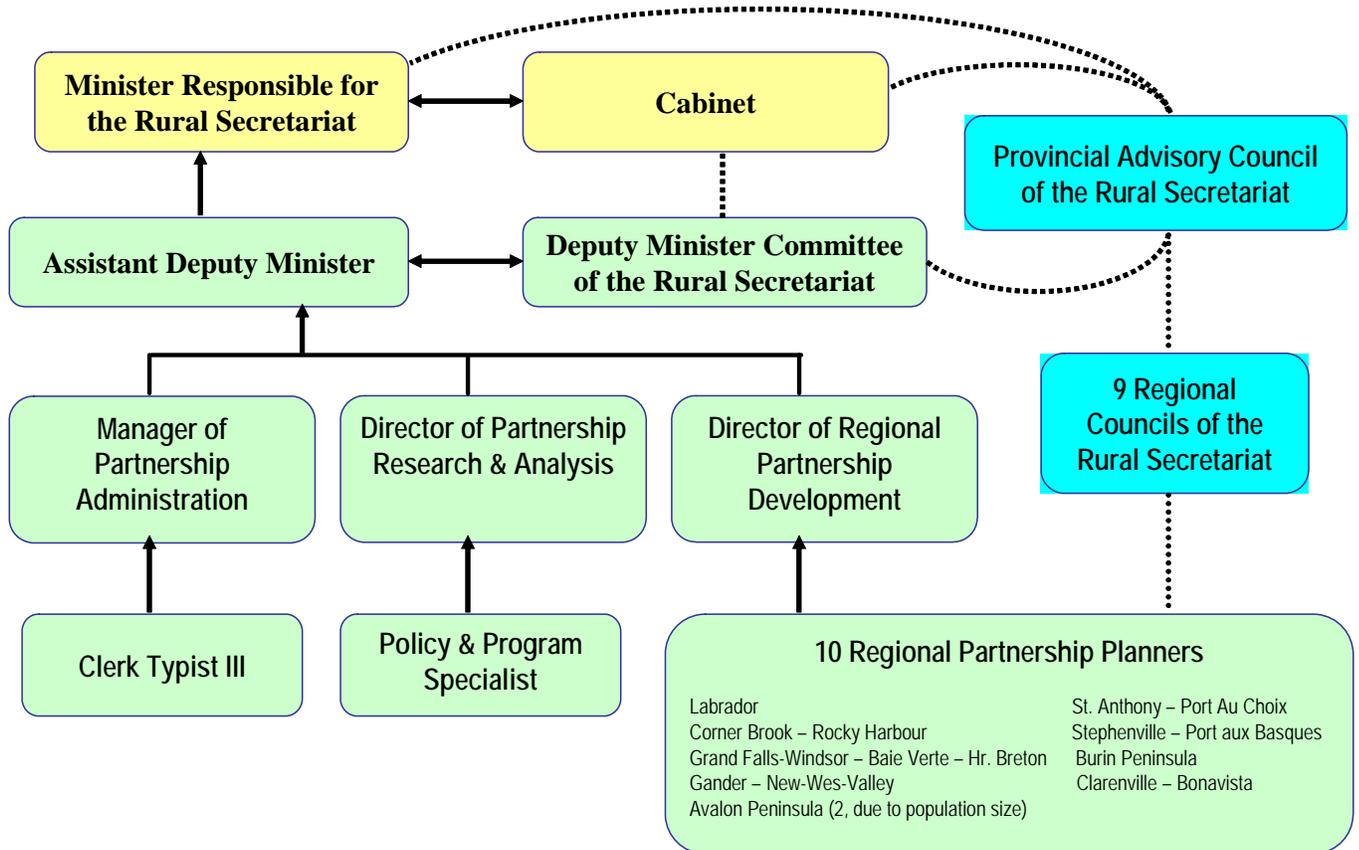
2. **Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability**

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

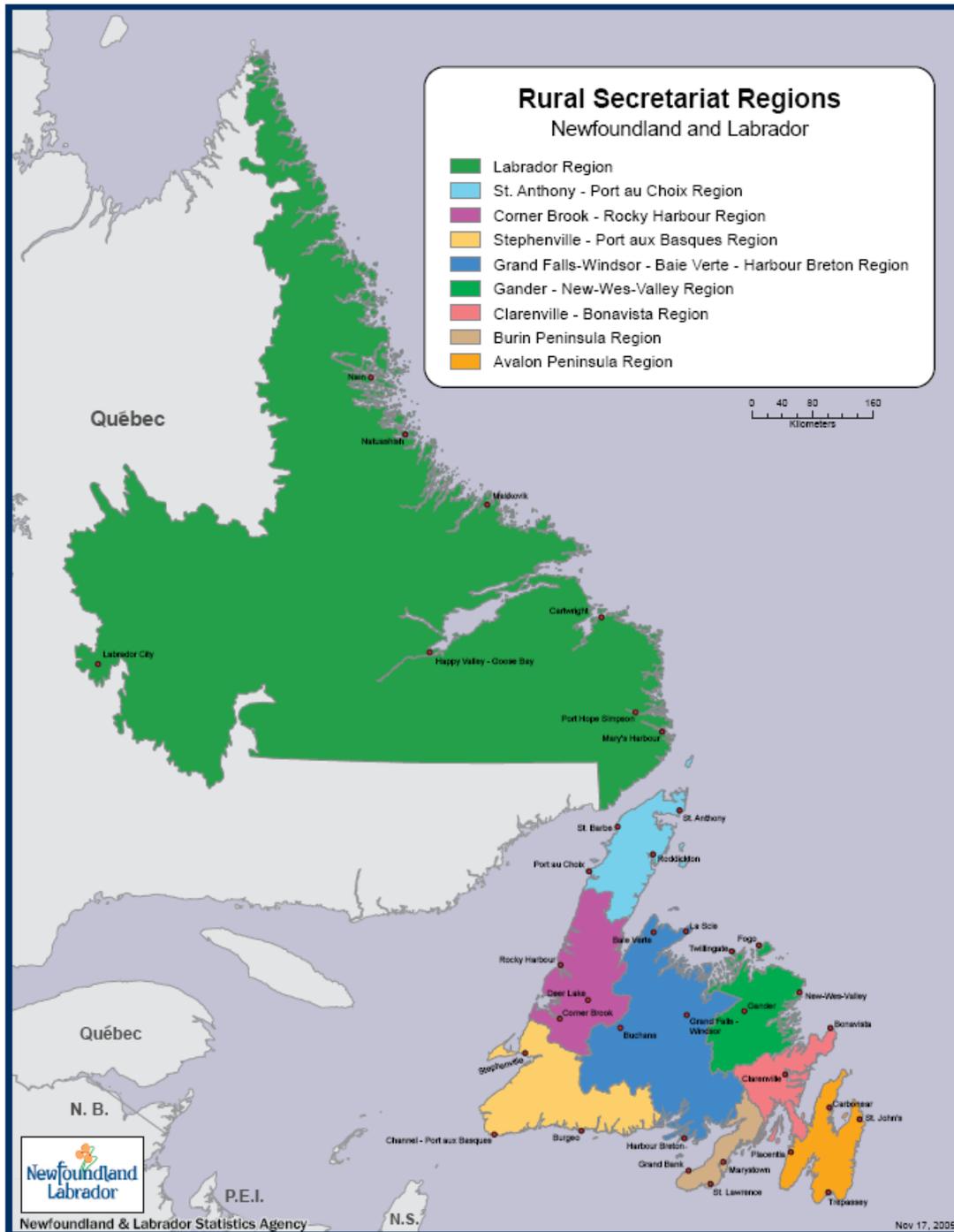
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- 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.

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Westport – Linda Brett (Cover, Top Left)

St. Albans – Roberta Collier (Cover, Top Right)

Botwood - Mary Snow (Cover, Bottom)

Rural Secretariat

Executive Council

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Regional Partnership Planner

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