



Labrador
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2009-10

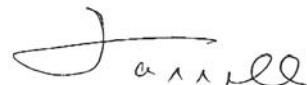


Message from the Chair

As Chairpersons for the Labrador Regional Council, We hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2009-10 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council please accept our signatures as indicative of the Council's accountability for our achievements and targets for the upcoming year. During this past year, the Council has focussed on health, transportation and energy issues. Each of these areas illustrates different challenges and we hope to help government overcome these areas of concern and work toward change in Labrador. The health of the region is very important and we have embarked on research in this area. We have also put forth two documents to government for further dialogue in the transportation and energy sectors. Over the past year we have met several times to continue choosing important topics to discuss and to support other partners within our region. We have had the opportunity to attend the Innovation and Collaboration: Learning and Changing Together conference and heard the point of view of many community members across the region. In this conference we learned about more priorities for Labrador and in the next year will be partnering to support these areas as well.

We look forward to continuing our work in 2010-11. Through partnering in the region, speaking with government and setting an agenda that reflects the community we hope to be a positive force for change in Labrador.

Sincerely,



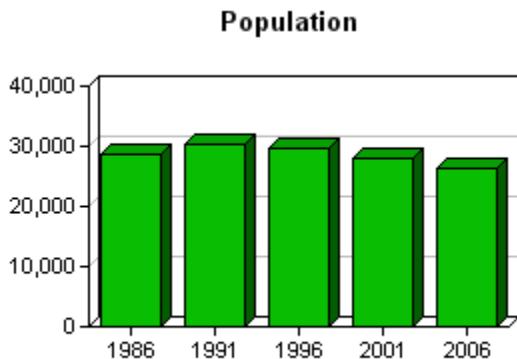
and

Lori O'Brien and Jim Farrell
Co-Chairs
Labrador Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

Table of Contents

1. Overview of the Region.....	3
2. Regional Council Overview.....	4
3. Mandate	5
4. Lines of Business.....	6
5. Values	6
6. Primary Clients.....	7
7. Vision	7
8. Mission.....	7
9. Report on Performance.....	8
10. Additional Highlights	13
11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead	14
Appendix A: Strategic Directions	16
Appendix B: Organizational Structure	17
Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions	18
Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils	19

1. Overview of the Region



The 2006 Census population for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 26,395. This represents a decline of 5.3% since 2001. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population decline of 1.5% since 2001 (505,470 in 2006, down from 512,930).

adjusted for inflation, was \$17,400 for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

Half of the couple families in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$80,200 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Half of the lone-parent families in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$26,300 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

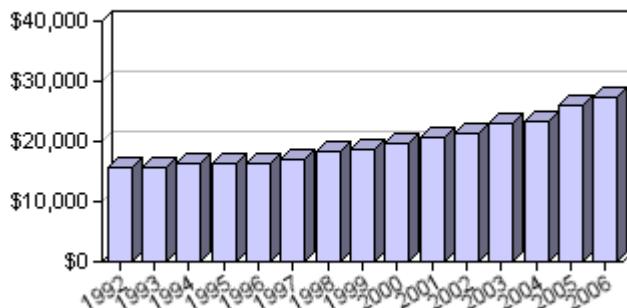
The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 87.7%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2006 was 78.5%.

According to the 2006 Census, in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region 69.6% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

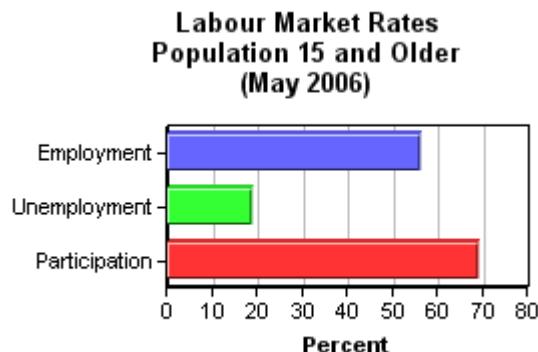
The unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 18.5%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 76.9%. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.

Personal Income Per Capita



The number of individuals in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 1,845. The 1991 figure was 4,695.



11.2% of people aged 25 to 54 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 15.1% in the province as a whole.

In 2006, in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region, 82.7% of people 25 to 34 years of age had at least a high school diploma. This compares to 85.4% in the entire province and 89.1% for Canada.

A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2005, 62.3% of individuals in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status from very good to excellent. The provincial number in 2005 was 64.5%. In 2005, for Canada, 60.2% of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

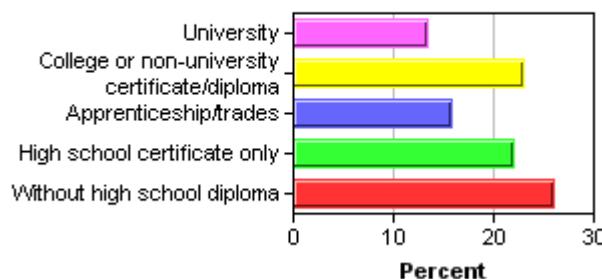
Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 610. The figure for 1991 was 2,085.

Census 2006 reported 26.0% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Labrador Rural Secretariat Region about

Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64



2. Regional Council Overview

The Labrador Regional Council is comprised of 10 members; six female and four male. The Council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including four members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The Council met four times.

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

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the Council and facilitate the work of the Council. The planner for the Labrador region is Lisa Densmore. Her office is located with Innovation, Trade and Rural Development at Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Regional Council members	Community
Carol Burden	Port Hope Simpson
Cora Edmunds	Postville
Guy Elliott	Labrador City
Jim Farrell	Wabush
Frank Hepditch	Labrador City
Jonathan Jesseau	Wabush
Lori O'Brien	L'Anse Au Loup
Patsy Ralph	Labrador City
Molly Shiwak	Nain
Gail Thorne	Happy Valley-Goose Bay

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

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- 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.
- Identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- 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.
- 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 coordinates the development of partnerships that focus on sustainable regional development and provides direct consideration of citizens' and stakeholders' priorities, perspectives and expectations in the development of public policy, infrastructure and other financial decisions, and other provincial government action that impacts regions and rural areas.
- **Formulation and provision of policy advice and analysis with respect to regions and rural areas:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates research and analysis on regional and rural socio-economic issues, provides advice and analysis on legislative, financial, policy, program and service delivery matters that impact regions and rural areas. It also influences and informs cross-departmental analysis and evidence-based decision making with respect to regional and rural challenges and opportunities.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of the Council and are 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 clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The Council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The Labrador 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 Council is as follows:

By 2011, the Council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will demonstrate the value of two-way communication between the provincial government and citizens.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the Council identified two goals. 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 2009-10 and beyond will further support these directions.

9.1 Issue 1: Health

Key themes emerging from community engagement that informed the Council's perspective included the need for: (i) pilot project for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; (ii) access to services such as health care are very expensive and challenging; (iii) the upfront cost of travel needs to be addressed; (iv) the importance of equal access to health services; (v) culturally appropriate services and translators; (vi) the importance communication around available programs and services to remote communities; (vi) recreation and sport are important and costly but need increased funding; and (vii) importance of quality of life considerations. This is now being explored through research with a partnership with Memorial University.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have developed and communicated a position paper identifying leadership, communication and partnering opportunities within the health sector in Labrador.

2009-10 Objectives:

By March 31, 2010, the Labrador Regional Council will have further explored opportunities in the health sector within the Labrador region.

Measures:

Opportunities in the health sector are further explored

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Research initiated through partnership with memorial University to investigate accessing health care in Labrador.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ During 2009-10 the Council initiated research through a partnership with Memorial University. In the current fiscal year, several meetings and teleconferences were held and from which a proposal and outline were developed and approved. Preliminary groundwork has been completed on the project. The project is set to be completed in the fall of 2010. ✓ The purpose of this research is to explore the factors influencing access to health care services in Labrador. Through the exploration of experiences of key stakeholders in health care service delivery and Labrador communities, this project will outline large-scale commonalities in factors that influence access to health care services. ✓ This study will attempt to answer the following research questions: What does 'adequate access to health care services' mean in the Labrador context? What factors (obstacles) hinder access to health care services? What factors (enablers) facilitate access to health care services? Are the factors experienced similarly throughout diverse communities in Labrador? What strategies can be taken to overcome obstacles and enhance enablers to improve access to health care services in Labrador? <p>*This description is taken from the research proposal and the full proposal is available upon request.</p>

Innovation and Collaboration conference held in October 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Innovation and Collaboration: Learning and Changing Together conference was developed as a collaboration effort in the region and the purpose was to explore how we could support communities, partnerships and learning in the region with the overall result of creating healthy safe and vibrant region. This broad goal, while not directly related to the health sector, was intended to allow partnerships grow toward general well being in the region and impact leadership, as referenced in the issue. ✓ The innovation and Collaboration: Learning and Changing Together conference was held over two days in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The seven priority areas identified were; (1) sustainable healthy food system, (2) opportunities for youth, (3) fully resourced health centre, (4) caring for the environment, (5) transportation, (6) affordable accessible child care, and (7) affordable, safe and accessible housing. Community members outlined seven goals to partner and work on for the next year (s). ✓ Council is building partnerships to support the seven priorities brought forth at the conference. The conference report and logic model are available at www.vplabrador.ca ✓ Overall messages that were heard throughout the conference included a need for equitable access to programs and services, more networking and better communication across the region and infrastructure. Infrastructure was recognized as a need to hold recreation programs and must be accessible to persons with disabilities as well as the need for affordable housing, transportation and paved roads to connect communities throughout the region. ✓ At the end of the conference an open group discussion was held that asked participants to think about the next steps after a conference like this one. Here are the topics that were discussed; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working team for each topic identified. 2. Awards ceremony to recognize great innovators within the community and to identify and celebrate local success. 3. Create a comprehensive community group to identify areas to work on. Sort of like a regional "CAP." 4. Open network or communication vehicle 5. Web site or forum to share successes, challenges and information 6. Manage organization and committees and what they are doing 7. CET network as a tool for networking and sharing around concerns and issues Being prepared ahead of time to advocate together during government consultations
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There has been much movement forward on the issue of health in the region. We have learned that there are many facets that impact the health of individuals and communities. Through our conference we are building networks and leadership. We have outlined what the communities in Labrador see as critical and through our research we will help government be informed on access to health in rural and remote regions. We intend on building on the community agenda and the research findings in the upcoming year.

2010-11 Objectives:

By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have communicated these opportunities to stakeholders and the provincial government.

2010-11 Measure:

Opportunities in the health sector within the Labrador region communicated to stakeholders and government

2010-11 Indicators:

- Research initiated through partnership with Memorial University to investigate accessing health care in Labrador completed
- Opportunities in the health sector communicated to government
- Opportunities in the health sector communicated to Stakeholders

9.2 Issue 2: Transportation and Energy

Energy and transportation issues directly relate to the health and well being of citizens in the Labrador region. With increased availability of power we can support industry and with better transportation links we can enhance business opportunities as well the mobility of the public. Transportation impacts all facets of Labrador's ability to find success in the social and economic environment. To improve transportation links and lower the cost of travel allows better access to regional services and supports improved health outcomes. These two areas of concern are very important to the sustainability of the region.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Labrador Regional Council will have developed, within the context of existing strategies, a preliminary discussion document related to energy and transportation issues within the Labrador region.

2009-10 Objectives:

By March 31, 2010, the Labrador Regional Council will have identified regional opportunities and challenges related to the Energy Plan.

Measure:

Regional opportunities and challenges will have been identified and communicated to government

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
A preliminary discussion document is created relating to energy issues in Labrador and submitted to government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A preliminary discussion document related to energy was submitted to government on April 27, 2010 outlining the concerns for the region over this issue. While the document was set to be communicated by March 31st but never went in until April 2010 was due to a delay in receiving all feedback from council members. ✓ There are documents created based on conversations with the council and with Memorial University outlining the council's discussion and Memorial university's presentations and discussions related to our learning about energy creation. They are all available through the Rural Secretariat.
Community engagement sessions have been held to discuss energy issues in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community engagement sessions were not held in the areas of energy because the council felt it did not have the expertise to hold an informed discussion on the issue. The council did engage the Department of Natural Resources and ask to be educated on the Energy Plan. They also had sessions with Memorial University on alternative energy sources and from there they submitted their concerns directly to the Department of Natural Resources. The concerns submitted were related to the Energy Plan and what they had heard in their own communities around the Energy Plan and proposed Lower Churchill Project.

Over the next year Council would like to hear from government in regards to the many questions and concerns they have outlined in their submission on the Energy Plan. With this information they can seek input from their communities on the Energy Plan and Lower Churchill. The Energy Plan outlines many potential opportunities for government and Council to work together to fulfill the concerns of the region around availability of power, cost of power and environmental impacts of large scale projects.

2010-11 Objectives:

By March 31, 2010, the Labrador Regional Council will have identified regional opportunities and challenges related to transportation.

2010-11 Measure:

Regional opportunities and challenges will have been identified

2010-11 Indicators:

- ✓ A preliminary discussion document relating to transportation opportunities and challenges in Labrador will be developed and submitted to government.

10. Additional Highlights

The Labrador Regional Council is working toward fulfilling its goals and has many accomplishments to highlight while fulfilling the three priority areas of health, transportation and energy. While building a foundation of knowledge around these priorities the council continues to learn more about other priorities in the region.

The Council feels that its performance in 2009-10 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. One of the underlying concerns of the region is the challenges of communication. With such a large area it is hard to have face-to-face contact and work together across the region however, the Innovation and Collaboration: Learning and Changing Together Conference helped to set new regional priorities and supports for collaboration. The intention of the conference grew into three main themes with speakers to showcase examples of success. The themes were: 1) Collaboration and Partnerships, 2) Innovation and Communication, 3) Building Resiliency and Community Capacity. Four partners got together in 2007 and began working together toward a goal of healthier communities. Each partner, the Rural Secretariat, Violence Prevention Labrador, Labrador Wellness Coalition and Primary Health Care, had a mandate to partner in the community and had a desire to better the health of our communities. Having similar goals and mandates allowed the working group of Kelly Janes, Lisa Densmore, Carmen Hancock and Sondra Spearing to become a driving force of partnership in the region of Labrador and including the Northern tip of Newfoundland. As they worked together and consulted with people across the region they discovered that many were crying out for leadership, communication and change.

Primary Health Care, Health and Wellness, Violence Prevention Labrador and the Rural Secretariat have created a monthly update pamphlet on the conference. It is intended to keep the momentum going as those who identified the conference priorities are linked through communication to keep up their great efforts. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues.

Since the conference was held a number of different and separate events have taken place. A Public Transportation group was started on facebook to gauge interest and ideas from the general public on the issue of public transportation. To date they have 240 members. A facebook page was also started to gather information and interests regarding community gardens. To date they have 50 members.

The regional partnership Planner has engaged the Community Youth Network in writing a proposal for a new youth centre for Happy Valley- Goose Bay. This proposal will be ready for the fall and we have high hopes it will be a success. The regional council will continue to learn about community issues and partake in community engagement throughout the summer and fall.

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is all-encompassing and long-term in nature, the opportunities and challenges faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. However, it is these opportunities and challenges that guide the Council members in their work and provide them with the drive to move their agenda forward over the course of the year.

Transportation is the number one concern in the Labrador region. It is seen as the key for moving forward in economic and social investment required to improve the health and well-being of Labradoreans. As this critical infrastructure is completed and improved upon it will create access to larger markets and health care facilities.

As traffic flows in and out of the region, opportunities will be created; along with affordability as the cost of shipping goods around the central and southern regions will be lower. Access to: economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of our region play a vital role in our ability to attract business and people alike.

The youth leave to become educated and feel connected to the rest of Canada. It is important that we recognize the isolation factor that pushes people out of the region. With the youth of today being so worldly they have much less tolerance for isolation. Reducing the feeling of isolation and challenges receiving services will impact the retention of youth. Couple this with education and economic opportunity and we will move toward sustainability.

As the nature of the work of the Council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. Council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

Council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for Council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for Council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

Council's mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for Council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for Council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and provide advice to government to advance

efforts to provide such supports.

Regional communications

Council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, such as and among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for Council is to openly and positively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for Council, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The Transparency and Accountability Act requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The directions related to the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

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

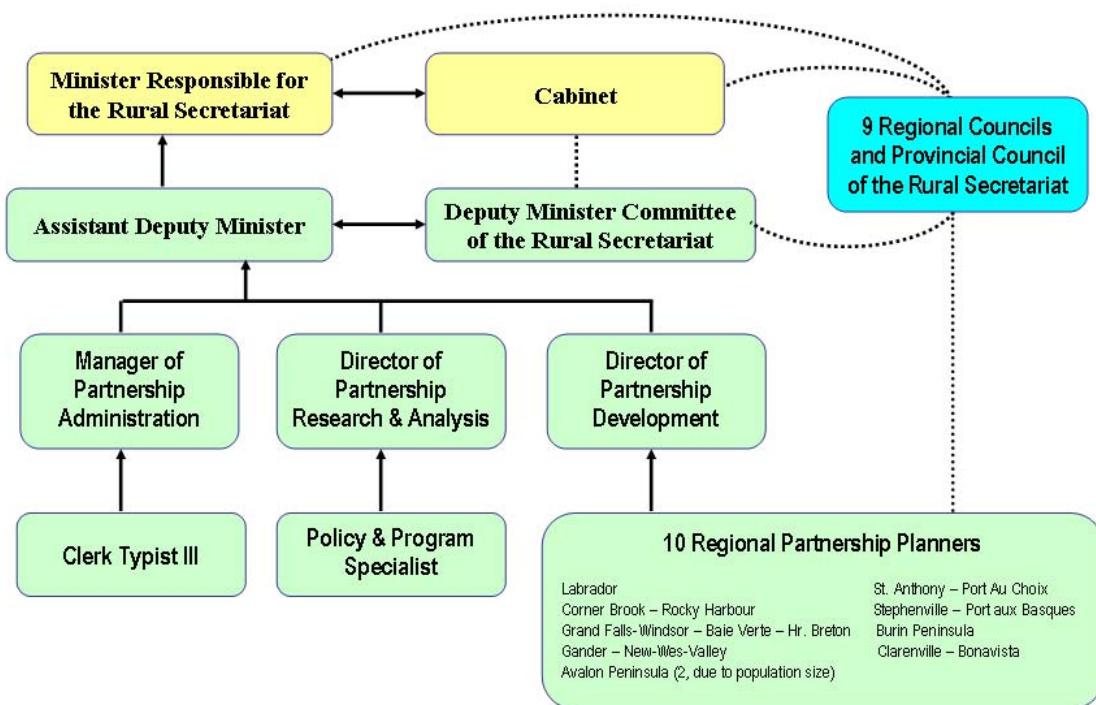
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

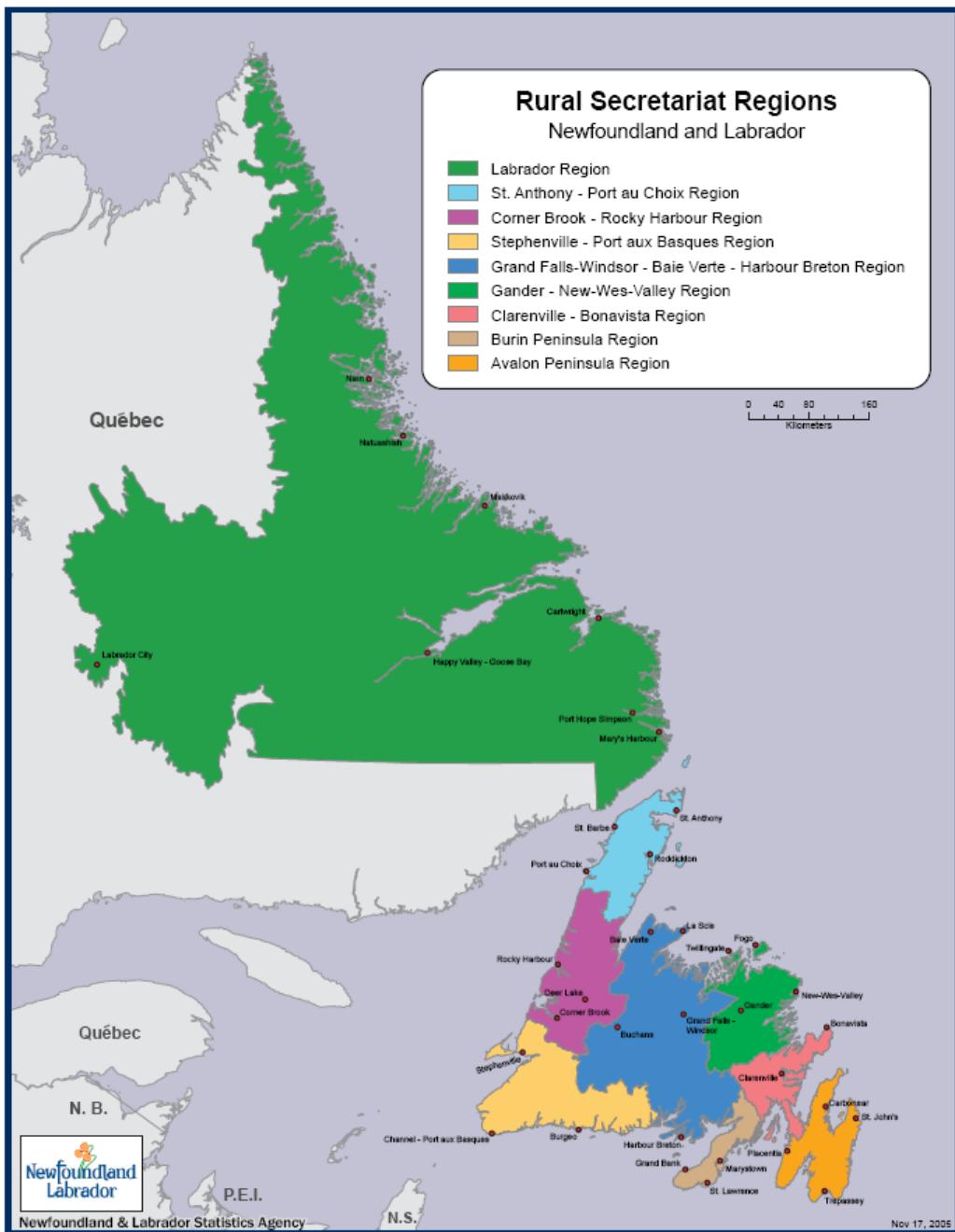
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

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.
- To identify and advise the provincial government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- 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.
- 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:



Photo Courtesy of Gerald Crane



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Densmore



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Densmore



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Densmore



Rural Secretariat

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