

**Labrador
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council**



**Activity Report
2008-09**

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Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Labrador Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2008-09 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.

During this past year, the council has focussed mainly on health issues and concerns for the region. We feel that this is an important topic because our communities will prosper more fully with healthy and resilient individuals. The geography makes promoting health programs and accessing health services a particular concern for our council. We feel we have learned a great deal around this topic and look forward to continuing community dialogues and putting forth solutions that work for our region in the health sector.

The Labrador Regional Council also began discussing on its other two priority areas – transportation and energy. We have begun to engage government, academia and community stakeholders to assist us in formulating our perspectives as we seek to refine our focus in these areas to develop policy advice.

We look forward to continuing our work in 2009-10.

Sincerely,



Lori O'Brien
Chair
Labrador Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region



The population of Labrador is estimated to be 26,631 in 2009, or about 5.2 percent of the total provincial population. This share is expected to remain unchanged over the next 15 years.

Employment in Labrador is estimated at 16,040 according to Census 2006, or 6.0 percent of total provincial employment. Employment in the region increased by about 2.2 percent over the past five years, and by 4.1 percent over the past ten years.

Goods-producing industries, including primary activity, mining and oil extraction, construction, utilities and manufacturing accounted for 34.7 percent of employment in the region in 2006. This sector accounted for 26.8 percent of provincial employment. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 1.

Private sector services, excluding private education and health services, accounted for 39.1 percent of employment compared to 46.3 percent for the

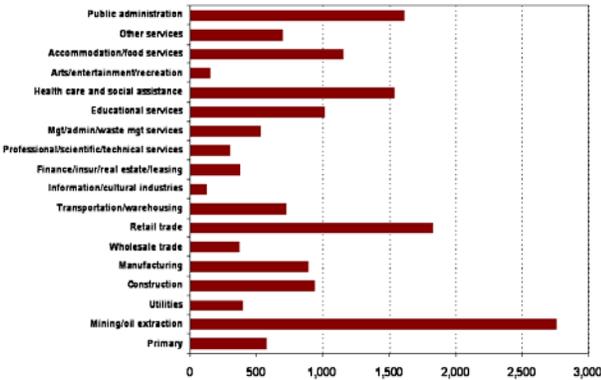
province as a whole.

Last, employment in public administration and services that are largely funded or delivered by the public sector, such as education, health care and social assistance, totalled 4,170 in 2005, or 26.0 percent of employment. This compares to 27.1 percent for the province as a whole.

Within the broad public administration and related services group, health care and social assistance services employment totalled 1,540 and educational services totalled 1,015. Federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal public administration, including defence services, totalled 1,615. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 2.

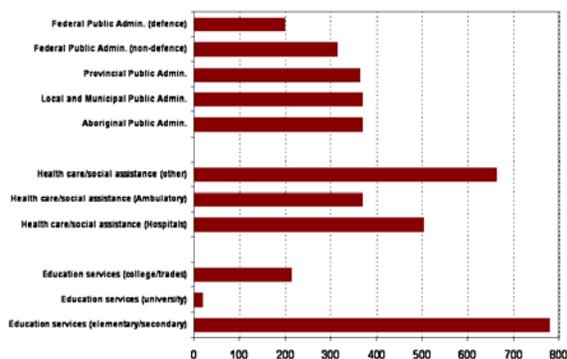
There were 158.1 persons employed in public administration and related services

**Chart 1
Employment by Industry, 2005**



in 2005 per 1,000 people resident in the region in 2005. This compares to 142.7 persons per every 1,000 residents for the province as a whole. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 3.

Chart 2
Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



The profile of employment in the region is also changing. In 2005, 83.7 percent of employment was considered full-time (30 or more hours per week) and 48.1 percent of employment was considered full-year (50 or more weeks worked per year). By comparison, 77.6 percent of employment was considered full-time in 1995, and 44.6 percent was considered full-year.

The potential labour supply is declining at a faster rate than employment. The labour force population (ages 15-64) was estimated at 21,800 in 1995 and 19,994 in 2005,

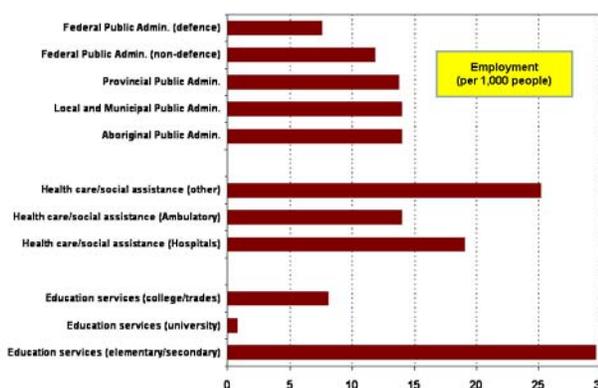
representing a decline of about 8.3 percent over the ten year period.

The more rapid decline in labour supply relative to employment has resulted in a lower unemployment rate and higher incomes, and indirectly resulted in lower reliance on income support.

The regional unemployment rate declined from about 25 percent in 1995 to 17.5 percent in 2005, and personal income per capita, after adjusting for inflation and personal taxes, grew by 25.6 percent.

Total incidence of income support, or the percentage of people that received income support at some point during the year, declined from 17.8 percent in 1995 to 9.0 percent in 2005.

Chart 3
Per capita Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



One of the key long term labour market challenge facing the region relates to how to meet employment demand as the labour supply ages and declines over the next decade. Today, about 27 percent of those ages 15-64 are ages 50-64. This is expected to increase to about 29 percent by 2020. Over the same period, the labour force age population is expected to decline by about 6.7 percent from about 19,400 to just over 18,000 persons.

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.

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 three times in 2008-09.

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. Below is a summary of the expenditures for the region including both planner and council costs:

	Labrador Budget 2008-09	Labrador Expenditures
Transportation & Communications	50,000.00	27,893.69
Supplies	2,500.00	542.01
Purchased Services	2,500.00	821
TOTAL	55,000.00	29,256.70

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 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. 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 long-term objective 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 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 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.

9.1 Issue 1: Health

As community consultations and discussions were held throughout 2007-08 it became apparent that health concerns were varied and complicated. Throughout the region it was identified by front line workers and community members that there was a lack of leadership, communication and partnership that could support the health sector as it was strengthened. This advice sculpted the goal described next.

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.

2008-09 Objectives:

By March 31, 2009, the Labrador Regional Council will have developed a discussion document on health issues in Labrador.

Measure:

Discussion Document Developed.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Discussions and Community Engagement efforts have occurred concerning health issues in Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional Partnership Planner met with stakeholders within the region to identify key issues and concerns relating to health issues and concerns. These key stakeholders included: women's groups, community members, Health and Wellness Coalition members from across the region and three open community meetings: one in Labrador West, one in Port hope Simpson and one in Forteau. • The council engaged the Memorial University's Harris Centre to identify health research relevant to the region and province. Selected researchers were invited to attend a Health research forum with the Harris Centre on specific health issues affecting the region including the cost of receiving cancer treatment and upcoming research planned for the area. The research and report for the engagement is available through Memorial University's Harris Centre and the Rural Secretariat intranet site.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Roundtable discussions are summarized into discussion document</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions related to health were compiled in to a health discussion document. The council reviewed the information gained from community engagement sessions and prioritized what they heard • The council is building partnerships in research to help focus policy advice in this sector to submit to the Provincial Government late in 2009. Memorial University is working with the Rural Secretariat to look for research opportunities in the region to further explore the priorities of the council. The key themes mentioned below and the council's discussion document will help direct any new research initiatives in the region and also provide evidence for the council's priority discussion. • 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; (iv) 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.

2009-10 Objective:

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

2009-10 Measure:

- Opportunities in the health sector are further explored

2009-10 Indicators:

- Research initiated through partnership with Memorial University to investigate accessing health care in Labrador.
- Innovation and Communication conference to be held October 27-28, 2009.

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.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Labrador Regional Council will have further discussed, from a regional and community perspective, transportation and energy issues pertaining to the Labrador region.

Measure:

Transportation and energy issues are further defined.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Community engagement sessions held	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation sessions were held as a part of larger community planning sessions. Communities cited the need for hard top road to be put down between Goose Bay and Labrador West, and the road to the straits. The completion of the road from Goose Bay to Cartwright was also a priority.• Transportation forum was held between the Harris Centre and three regional councils (Labrador, St. Anthony- Port Au Choix and Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour) to work together on the transportation issue.
Discussions are summarized in to a discussion document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council reviewed information from the community meetings and summarized the transportation needs in Labrador. The concerns for transportation, beyond roads were identifies as: (i) a regional airport in the South Coast; (ii) the lengthening of the airstrip in Nain and lights for night time operation. Discussion documents were created from the community engagement sessions helped educate and inform the council on the issues.• A transportation forum coordinated by the Harris Centre was held in September 2008 with three councils participating. A

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
	<p>report from this session was made available to council by the Harris Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's work around energy with the Harris Centre was summarized in a discussion document on energy, specifically outlining alternative energy potential, and how these energy alternatives could benefit Labrador (especially for isolated communities where power lines may not be feasible). A report from the session was prepared by the Harris Centre.

To develop perspective on energy issues pertaining to the Labrador region, the council asked the Harris Centre to host a session with two researchers from Memorial University as well as an Energy Coordinator with the Sierra Club Canada. Topics covered in this session included a review of the current provincial Energy Plan, and alternative, renewable energy sources. Through this engagement, the council gained a better understanding of renewable energy sources and the current Energy Plan. The council were unable to conduct community engagement around energy issues in 2008-09 as indicated in their 2008-09 objective. This was due to the complex nature of the Energy Plan and council felt it was important to take part in an upfront educational dialogue before going into community. To enhance the community and regional perspective on energy issues, the council will conduct community engagement activities on energy issues in 2009-10 to build on this understanding and perspective.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

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

2009-10 Measure:

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

2009-10 Indicators:

- A preliminary discussion document is created relating to energy issues in Labrador and submitted to government.
- Community engagement sessions have been held to discuss energy issues in the region.

10. Additional Highlights

The Labrador Regional Council is seeking to broaden public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. It aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on these opportunities and challenges. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region.

The Council feels that its performance in 2008-09 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. Council is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues.

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, two additional highlights and accomplishments are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the Council in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The Regional Council continued its community engagement process. The focus of community engagement shifted in 2008-09 from previous years. In 2008-09 there was increased emphasis on engagement with established stakeholders and organized groups in the areas of health, research and partnership. The engagements around health concerns were compiled into a discussion document to inform and enhance the dialogue of regional council. These discussions help to clarify where there are concerns for communities and where there may be gaps in communication or services. The council opted to prioritize this information for ease of use and understanding. Another use and advantage to the information gathered is that it will help guide the research planned for 2009 and a partnership has been struck to oversee the research process. The process of having research completed in the region is a partnership with Memorial University. Together we will create a proposal to submit for to funding agencies for health research.

Labrador Regional Council members attended a learning event hosted by the Rural Secretariat in October 2008. Building on the annual Dialogue Day events from 2004 to 2007, this event was facilitated by Dr. Rupert Downey of the University of Victoria and focused on community-based research. This learning event was followed by the *Knowledge in Motion '08* conference hosted by the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Development of Memorial University. This conference focused on the importance of linking university research to community development needs and priorities and how to translate knowledge to inform public policy and decision making.

The Regional Council continued its community engagement process. The focus of community engagement shifted in 2008-09 from previous years. In 2008-09 there was increased emphasis on engagement with established stakeholders and organized groups in the partnership and health and wellness. The council formed a partnership with the Violence Prevention Initiative and the Health and Wellness Coalition. Together these organizations plan to provide a series of work shops

building leadership in the health sector. The workshops will be held one per year from 09-11 and will address innovation, communication and partnerships in the health sector of Labrador.

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 Labradorians. 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. The council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The 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 the 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 the 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

The 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 the 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 the 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

The 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 the 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

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

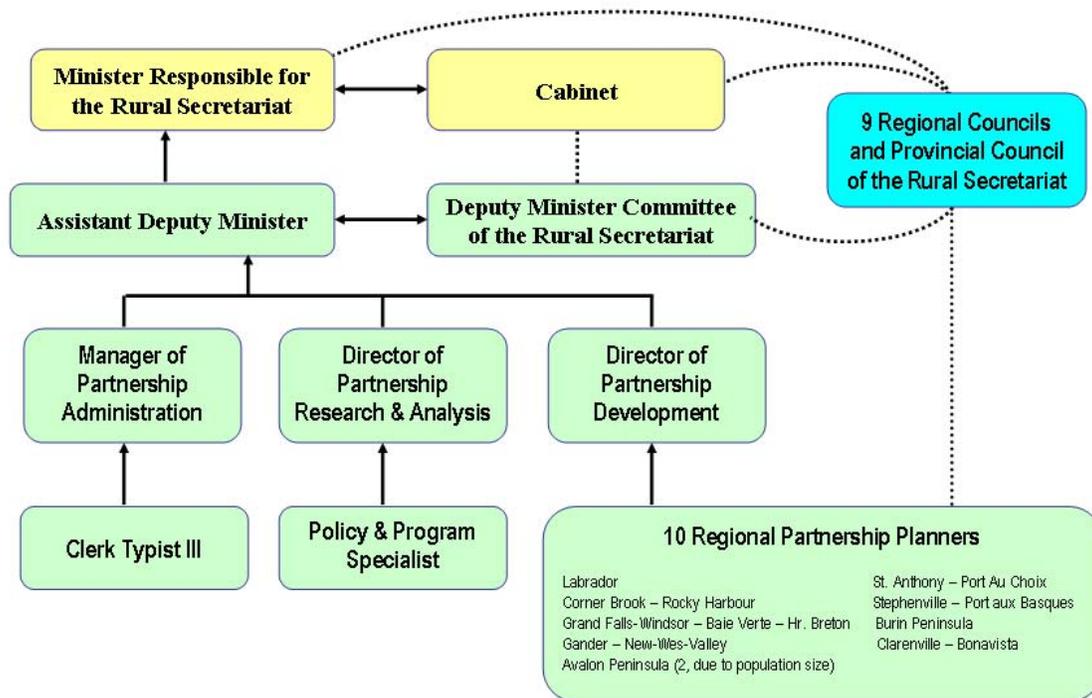
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

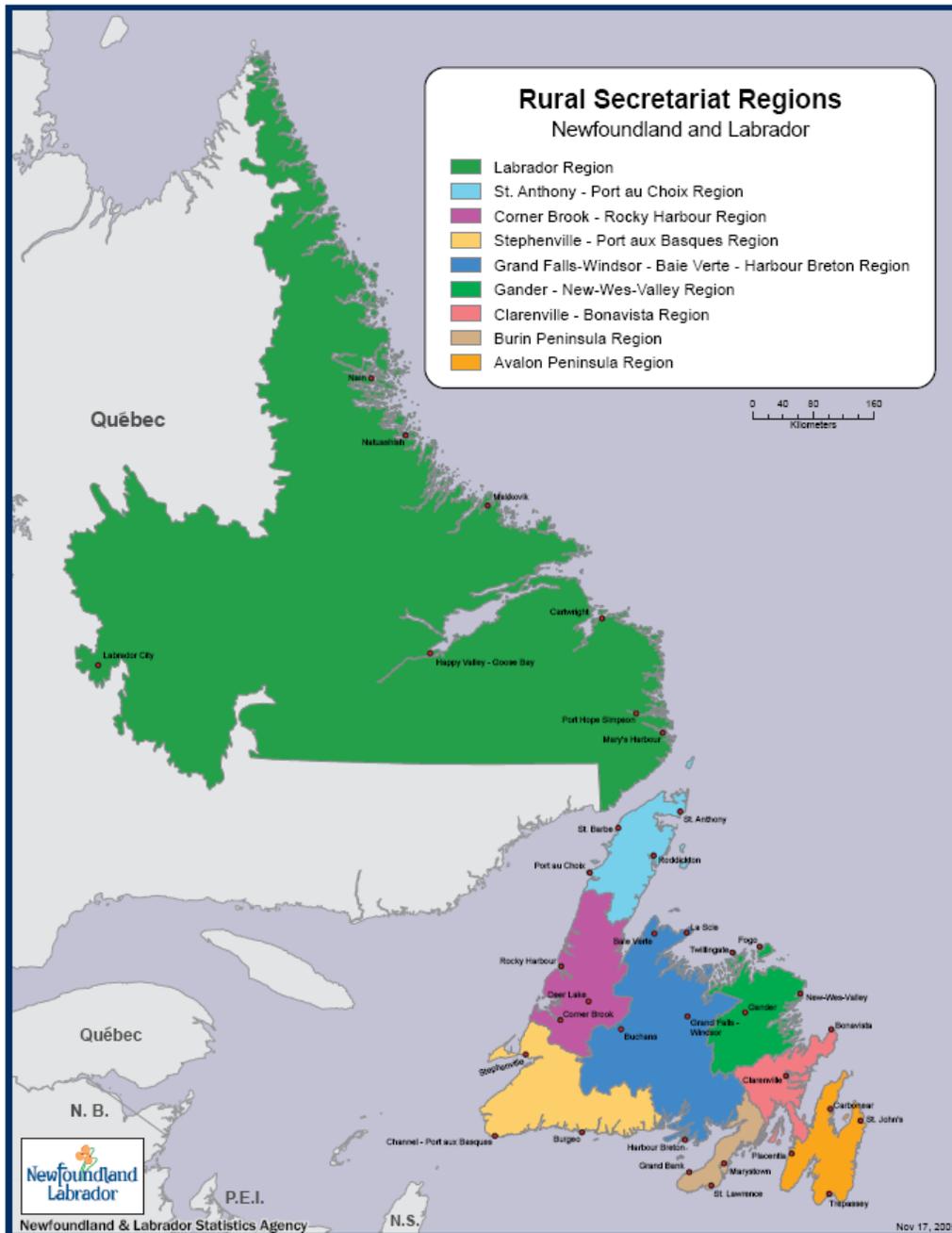
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

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.
- 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:



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