

North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee

Annual Report
2016-17

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present the 2016-17 Annual Report for the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act requirements for a category three entity. In planning and conducting our activities, the Committee operates in consideration of the strategic directions of government. In particular, the Committee's activities are consistent with strategic directions related to sustainable communities and a competitive work and business environment and supports The Way Forward commitment to advancing regional collaboration.

The Committee is mandated under the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000 and is comprised of representatives of the 15 municipalities from and including the towns of Witless Bay and Holyrood and all municipalities north from there to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana. I am pleased to be involved in the process as we work together towards developing a regional land use plan for government's consideration.

As a committee, we look forward to contributing to the development of a new regional land use plan. My signature below indicates that the Committee accepts accountability for the preparation of this report and the results reported.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eddie Joyce".

EDDIE JOYCE

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment

Overview

The principal function of the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee (the committee) is to facilitate the development of the North East Avalon's regional land use plan for recommendation to government. As such, the committee oversees the work and preparation associated with development of a plan which will help lead future growth and development in the region.

The North East Avalon region includes the area from and including the Towns of Witless Bay and Holyrood and all lands north from there to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana/Bell Island. The committee is established pursuant to section 9 of the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000. It is comprised of mayors from each of the region's 15 municipalities and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment as Chairperson. In addition, the committee is supported by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL), serving in the capacity of project management lead, and the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

In accordance with the committee's Terms of Reference, the committee is responsible for the following:

1. Approving the terms of reference/call for proposals to engage a consultant for preparation of a draft regional plan;
2. Reviewing the recommendations of a review committee comprised of representatives of MNL, the department, and technical staff from the region regarding the proposals and making a final recommendation to the Minister with regard to the preferred consultant;
3. Directing the work of the project management lead (MNL) and their project management consultant, with regards to needed engagement of individuals and organizations to learn about current issues within the regional planning area;
4. Advising the planning consultant, through or in conjunction with MNL, on issues within the regional planning area;
5. Providing available background material or studies to the planning consultant, through MNL;
6. Reviewing and approving an appropriate public consultation process, based on recommendations from MNL, its project management consultant, the department, the planning consultant;

7. Communicating progress on the regional plan development to municipal councils and provincial departments, as applicable to the individual committee member;
8. Reviewing drafts of the regional plan and providing comments to the consultant, through or in conjunction with MNL and their project management consultant;
9. Recommending to the Minister approval of the final version of the draft regional plan; and
10. Working with the department to organize statutory public hearings on the draft regional plan, as required by the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000.

As of March 31, 2017, the members of the committee were:

Minister Eddie Joyce (Chair)	Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment
Mayor John Kennedy	Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove
Mayor Stephen Tessier	Town of Conception Bay South
Mayor Gary Gosine	Town of Wabana
Mayor Patrick O’Driscoll	Town of Bay Bulls
Mayor Sébastien Després	Town of Witless Bay
Mayor Randy Simms	City of Mount Pearl
Mayor Gary Goobie	Town of Holyrood
Mayor Dan Bobbett	Town of Paradise
Mayor Joedy Wall	Town of Pouch Cove
Mayor Dennis O’Keefe	City of St. John’s
Mayor Moses Tucker	Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip’s
Mayor Christopher Dredge	Town of Bauline
Mayor Darrin Thorne	Town of Flatrock
Mayor Nat Hutchings	Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove
Mayor Ralph Tapper	Town of Torbay

Budget and Expenditures

The committee does not have an office or staff, nor does it manage any funds or financial statements. Further, members of the committee do not receive remuneration.

Prior to commencing the North East Avalon Regional Plan, the Province and the 15 municipalities agreed to share the cost of developing the plan on a 50/50 basis, including the costs of a project management firm and a consultant. The municipalities contribute on a per capita basis using the 2011 Statistics Canada Census. MNL, in its capacity as project management lead, administers the funds on behalf of the plan partners.

Report on Performance

Issue: Regional Land Use Plan

The North East Avalon has experienced exponential growth and development in recent years which is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Land use planning in the region is currently guided by the municipal plans for each of the 15 municipalities, including the St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan which was approved in 1976.

In recent years, a number of plans have been updated and amended, while others remained unchanged. As such, the committee recognizes that the resulting policies and strategies of the regional plan and associated municipal plans may be inconsistent with each other. Updating the regional plan, and municipal plans as necessary, will help ensure a coherent and sustainable vision and land use strategy towards the growth and development of the region.

A new regional land use plan is required to address the following issues:

- Municipal Services;
- Transportation;
- Environment;
- Diverse Development;
- Plan Governance;
- Economy; and
- Collaboration.

The development of a regional land use plan for the North East Avalon supports strategic directions related to sustainable communities and is consistent with the Way Forward focus on a stronger economic foundation. The committee's efforts in developing a regional land use plan for recommendation to the Minister will benefit local governments, the Provincial Government and residents of the region.

Given the Committee's specific mandate is to develop a regional land use plan for recommendation to the Minister, the Committee determined that a three year goal was not applicable. The Committee reports on the same annual objective for each year of its Activity Plan (2014-17).

2016-17 Objective:

By March 31, 2017, the committee will have overseen and facilitated the development of the North East Avalon’s regional land use plan.

Planned Indicator	Actual Results
Review and approve the consultant’s deliverables at each of the five phases of the project	<p>During 2016-17, the committee reviewed the consultant’s report on Background Issues and Analysis (phase two) of their planning project. This report can be found at http://www.ournortheastavalon.com/about</p> <p>Visioning (phase three) was initiated by the consultant. Public consultations to support phase three have been conducted through open house meetings, presentations, and on-line community survey questionnaires.</p>
Review and select planning alternatives as presented by the consultant	This indicator was not met. The project schedule was revised such that the presentation and review of planning alternatives to establish preferred options is anticipated in 2017-18.

Discussion of Results:

The five phases of the planning project include: Public Consultation; Background Issues and Analysis; Visioning; Alternative Scenarios; and, Draft and Register the North East Avalon Regional Plan. As the consultant completes deliverables for each phase, these are submitted to the committee for review and approval. Approved reports contribute to the development of the regional plan. In 2016-17, the second phase report was approved and work commenced on the third phase.

The committee consists of leaders from fifteen municipalities. The complexity of the committee has presented a challenge for the capacity to establish a quorum at regular meetings. This has delayed the anticipated progress on some indicators. The committee anticipates resuming its work after the September 2017 municipal elections. Planning alternatives are expected to be reviewed in 2017-18.

Opportunities and Challenges

The north east Avalon is the most highly populated region of the province and is the regional centre for commercial, industrial and government services for the eastern part of the Island of Newfoundland. It is an area that has experienced significant growth in the past decade and this growth is expected to continue. The growth has occurred within multiple municipalities and outside areas of municipal jurisdiction within the region.

Although there are innate challenges in harmonizing development practices in multiple jurisdictions, the development of a regional land use plan creates an opportunity to introduce consistency. Consistency in land use and development policies will reduce regulatory requirements for businesses wishing to set up or expand across municipal borders, thereby encouraging continued economic development for all community partners.