

# St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority

Annual Performance Report 2023-24



## Chairperson's Message

The Honourable Gerry Byrne  
Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture  
Petten Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL  
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Dear Minister Byrne:

In accordance with the provisions of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for category three public bodies, I am pleased to submit the Annual Performance Report for the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority (the Authority) for the period of April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

The Authority was successful in fulfilling its objective for the reporting period. The Authority was also successful in supporting Government's commitment to enhanced utilization, sustainability and public awareness of the forestry, agriculture and agrifoods sectors.

My signature below is on behalf of the Authority and indicative of the Authority's accountability for the results reported on its objective for 2023-24.

Respectfully submitted,



**Jeremy Short**  
Chairperson

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# Overview

The Authority was created to review applications regarding development within the St. John’s Urban Region Agricultural Development Area (ADA) as per the **St. John’s Urban Region Agriculture Development Area Regulations** (the Regulations) under the **Lands Act** (the Act).

Section 3 of the Regulations under the Act provides for the appointment of the Authority. The Authority is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) and must have at least five people, including a Chairperson and a Secretary. During the reporting period, the Authority was made up of members from FFA, as well as members from other resource departments as per the Regulations. Appointments are made using a merit-based process; however, gender balance is considered during the appointment process and efforts are made to ensure the Authority is representative of the population it serves.

As of March 31, 2024, the membership of the Authority consisted of the following:

Name	Position	Department
Jeremy Short	Chairperson	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Megan Nichols	Secretary	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
John Del Rizzo	Member	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Teri Smith	Member	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Karen Tucker	Member	Digital Government and Service NL
Assigned Member	Member	Municipal and Provincial Affairs

All members are employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and receive no additional remuneration for their involvement with the Authority. There is no budget allocation specific to the duties of the Authority.

The Authority received extensive operational support from FFA. Employees of FFA performed day-to-day administrative functions and consulted other staff regarding applications where necessary. Budgetary support for operations was also provided through FFA.

# Mandate

The Authority has a mandate to:

- a) Review applications to carry out development on land within the St. John’s Urban Region Agriculture Development Area;
- b) Inform municipalities of decisions made;
- c) Monitor activities within the St. John’s Urban Region Agriculture Development Area; and
- d) Ensure awareness of the St. John’s Urban Region Agriculture Development Area and associated Regulations.

For more detail on the Regulations, please refer to the House of Assembly website at: <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc961079.htm>.

## **Vision**

Through assessment of applications for development activities on land in the St. John's Urban Region ADA, the Authority contributes to the vision of FFA, that of sustainable renewable resources that are responsibly developed for the social, cultural, ecological and economic well-being of the province.

## **Lines of Business**

The Authority has not identified separate lines of business as this would be repetitive of its mandate as described above.

## **Primary Clients**

The clients of the Authority are individuals or organizations who apply through the municipal councils of the City of St. John's; Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's; Town of Pouch Cove; Town of Flatrock; Town of Torbay; Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove; and the Town of Conception Bay South to carry out development on land in the St. John's Urban Region ADA.

## **Contact Information**

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## **Highlights and Partnerships**

The Authority works in partnership with the municipalities located within the St. John's Urban Region ADA to review applications for land development. The partnership between the Authority and municipalities led to all applications being processed and a decision rendered to the applicant in a timely manner, which was within 30 days of applications being received. While the Authority assesses the applications, municipalities are responsible for informing applicants of the decision, including an explanation of the Authority's decision pursuant to the Regulations.

## Report on Performance

The Authority contributes to the 2023-24 goals and objectives of FFA regarding natural resource development. Specifically, the Authority supports Government's commitment to enhanced utilization, sustainability and public awareness of the agriculture and agrifoods sectors. During 2023-24, this was accomplished through the protection of agricultural land and farm activities within the St. John's Urban Region ADA in the review of applications for development activities and by regulating development to ensure consistency with agricultural purposes.

The objective and indicators below are derived from the 2023-26 Activity Plan of the Authority. This is the first year of the 2023-26 reporting period. As the focus of Authority will remain the same for the entire plan, the Authority will report on the same objective and indicators in all three years of the planning period. For more details, please refer to the Activity Plan here: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/electronicdocuments/SJLDAAActivityPlan2023-2026.pdf>

### **Issue: Sustainable Agricultural Development in the St. John's Urban Region ADA**

#### **Objective 2023-24**

By March 31, 2024, the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority will have worked to ensure development activities in the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area are compliant with the Act and Regulations, thus supporting ongoing, sustainable agricultural development in the area.

#### **Indicators**

- **Reviewed all applications and rendered decisions.**

The Authority received 11 applications during 2023-24. The Authority conducted e-mail meetings on 11 occasions to review all 11 applications received for agricultural and non-agricultural development within the boundaries of the St. John's Urban Region ADA. All applications were reviewed by a quorum of the Authority. Of the 11 eligible applications that were reviewed by the Authority in 2023-24, eight were approved and three were refused. Of these 11 applications, three were applications for land severance or subdivision and dwellings; one was for existing residential developments (e.g., driveway, shed or garage); six were for greenhouses or related agricultural activities; and one was for permission to operate an in-home daycare.

Within 30 days of all decisions rendered in 2023-24, the Secretary forwarded the decisions of the Authority to the applicable municipalities or sent notification that more time would be required due to the nature of the application. Municipalities are responsible for informing applicants of the decision, including an explanation of the Authority's decision pursuant to the Regulations. All applications were processed within 30 days of being received.

- **Maintained records of decisions.**

In 2023-24, the Secretary of the Authority maintained and updated a registry of all applications, including decisions.

- **Monitored development activities for compliance with Regulations.**

Staff members of the Authority regularly performed field work within the St. John's Urban Region ADA and actively monitored development activity to ensure compliance with respect to the Regulations during these routine field visits. During the 2023-24 development season, nine monitoring inspections were completed, which determined that all ongoing development activities were compliant with the Regulations at that time. Monitoring of the St. John's Urban Region ADA includes investigating public complaints and doing routine drive-throughs to ensure there is no unauthorized development taking place.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

There are multiple opportunities to work with municipalities to increase awareness and promotion of agricultural development within their boundaries to a new generation of farmers. Continued consultation with municipalities on proposed developments within the St. John's Urban Region ADA and support from FFA to protect arable land within the ADA increases awareness and illustrates support for future agricultural developments.

A significant portion of the land-base in the St. John's Urban Region ADA is privately owned. While this land may have been previously used for farming, the current owners may not have the ability or interest to develop it for agricultural purposes and this creates a challenge for future agricultural land development.

## **Financial Information**

Audited financial statements are not required as the Authority is budgeted through FFA. There are no per diems, travel or other costs associated with the administration of the Authority.