



*Stephenville-Port Aux Basques  
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat  
Executive Council  
Annual Activity Report 2009-10*



# Message from the Chair

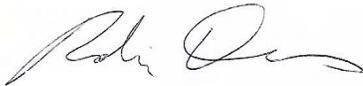
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As Chairperson for the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2009-10 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results achieved.

The past year has been an active one for the regional council members as we focused on meeting our commitments with respect to the Transparency and Accountability Act. In addition to attending regular Regional Council meetings and working toward fulfilling the transparency & accountability commitments during the reporting period, there were also other activities whereby a proportion of the council members attended thus providing representation on behalf of the full council.

Our Council is looking forward to having a new Regional Planner in place soon so we can have some meaningful discussions about the sustainability of Rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Ultimately, our overall goal is to help influence and effect positive change in the region and province as a whole.

Sincerely,



Robin Davis  
Chair  
Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

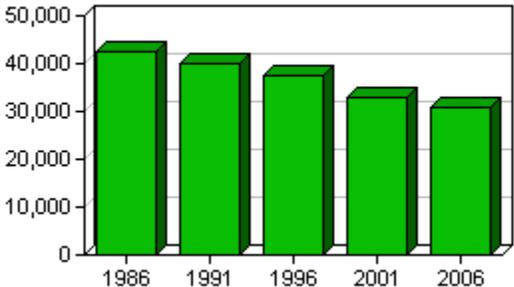
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# 1. Overview of the Region

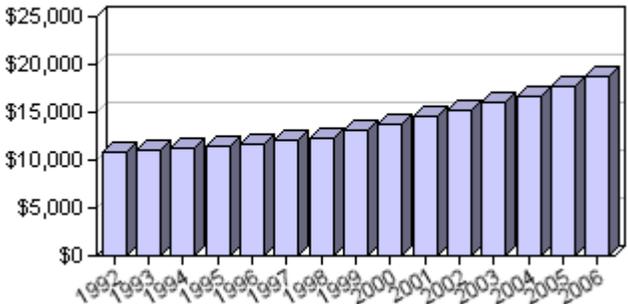
**Population**



The 2006 Census population for Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region was 30,955. This represents a decline of 6.2% 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).

Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region was \$18,800. For the province, personal income per capita was \$22,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$12,800 for Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

**Personal Income Per Capita**



Half of the couple families in Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$47,200 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Half of the lone-parent families in Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$22,700 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

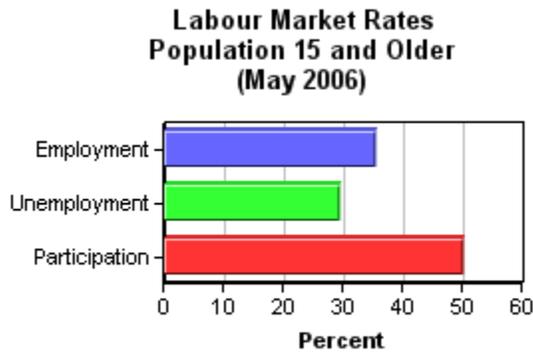
The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region was 67.6%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income 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 Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region 78.1% 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 29.3%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 54.2%. The

provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.



The number of individuals in Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 5,040. The 1991 figure was 9,950.

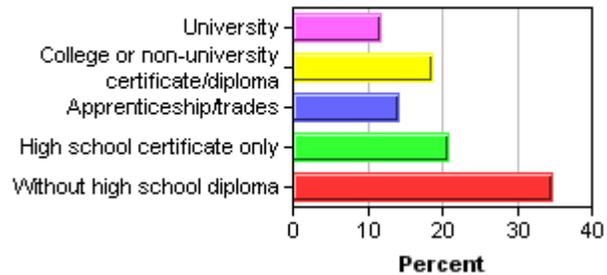
The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 1,370. The figure for 1991 was 3,950.

Census 2006 reported 34.7% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region about 8.6% 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 Stephenville - Port aux Basques Rural Secretariat Region, 75.9% 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.

**Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64**



A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2005, 57.2% of individuals in Stephenville - Port aux Basques 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](http://www.communityaccounts.ca) and [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/).

## 2. Regional Council Overview

The Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council is comprised of 10 members; five female and five male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region. The council met five times in 2009-10.

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 Stephenville-Port aux Basques region was Sam Organ up until February 2010 and remained vacant until the end of the fiscal year. The Rural Secretariat office is located with Innovation, Trade and Rural Development at Stephenville.

<b>Regional Council members</b>	<b>Community</b>
Robin Davis (Chair)	Stephenville Crossing
Jacqueline Deaves	Cape St. George
Ruth Forsey-Gale	McKay's
Henry Gaudon	Loudres
Margaret Gaudon	Port au Port
Audrey Gracie	Kippens
Sheila King	Burnt Island
Eric Legge	Cartyville
Jeff Patry	Doyles
Calvin White	Flat Bay

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

## 3. Mandate

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The Regional Council mandate 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 over the five-year period.
- 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.

## 4. Lines of Business

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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

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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 to transcend traditional ideas, rules and patterns to create new ideas, relationships and methods.
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

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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

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The Stephenville-Port aux Basques 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

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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. 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

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In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the council identified three 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: Sustainability**

As a means to achieving sustainability, Regional Council members decided to investigate agriculture and agrifoods. Council saw this economic sector as important for their region based on the fact that the region has a long history in agriculture, and has some of the most fertile soils and produces more root crop than any other area of the province.

#### **Goal:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have developed an informed regional perspective outlining the opportunities and barriers to expand agriculture and agrifoods production in the region.

#### **2009-10 Objective:**

By March 31, 2010, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have communicated identified opportunities and issues within the agriculture and agrifoods sector.

#### **Measure:**

Engage with industry representatives on the Council's advice document

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Accomplishments 2009-10</b>
Advisory paper on agriculture and agrifoods industry distributed to industry representatives within the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Advisory paper was mailed out to industry representatives, including Beef/Lamb/Pork producers, nursery operators, crop producers, and dairy producers, within the region.</li><li>✓ The paper originated from RC priorities and was developed as a result of both primary and secondary research activities that included a literature review and engagement sessions with industry and government personnel as well as others. The paper contained a brief list of industry opportunities as well as issues/barriers and a section whereby recommendations were put forth for consideration by both industry and government.</li></ul>

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Engagement sessions held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Regional Partnership Planner was involved in an Agri-food working group which solicited a consultant to carryout an industry assessment. This assessment included interviews with 22 of the 30 farmers in the region. The Assessment was completed March 31, 2010.</li> <li>✓ Because of the planners involvement in this project and the potential for relevant information to emerge from this project Council decided that it did not want to hold engagement sessions until after the assessment was complete. In the interim council did hold several one-on-one sessions with industry representatives.</li> </ul>

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

**2010-11 Objective:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have engaged with government, community stakeholders and industry to advance specific policy, program and business opportunities identified in the agriculture and agrifoods sector.

**2010-11 Measure:**

- Government, community stakeholders and industry engaged

**2010-11 Indicators:**

- Engagement sessions held with Government, community stakeholders and Industry.

**9.2 Issue 2: Transportation**

A fundamental requirement for sustainability for any region is having the ability to move people, goods and services. The Stephenville – Port aux Basques region currently has significant existing transportation infrastructure ranging from a roads network to airport and marine infrastructure. However, there is a need to ensure that infrastructure is well developed and maintained; including further enhancements that may be required to ensure the region can be responsive to potential development. It is also important to be cognizant that transportation infrastructure cuts across other sectors and impacts accessibility issues.

**Goal:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have developed an informed regional perspective on transportation infrastructure in relation to regional sustainability.

**2009-10 Objective:**

By March 31, 2010, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have identified opportunities for action related to the maintenance or improvement of transportation infrastructure.

**Measure:**

Opportunities for action identified

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Community engagement sessions held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Council defines community engagement as a process of engaging relevant stakeholders in issues that either directly or in-directly impact them. These stakeholders may be individuals, representatives from grass-roots groups or formal organizations, government departments and agencies.</li><li>✓ The following sessions were held throughout 2009-10 by the Council and were attended by representatives of the Zone Boards, Port au Port Economic Development Association and various municipalities.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A representative from the Department of Transportation and Works met with Regional Council and presented and discussed the Department's role &amp; responsibilities with respect to roads and bridges; as well as the Vessel Replacement Strategy</li><li>- A representative from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Newfoundland and Labrador Division, presented on the link between transportation links (i.e. roads networks, ferries, airports) and private industry</li><li>- A representative of the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, presented on and discussed the provincial broadband initiative</li></ul></li></ul>
Community-based research completed to provide additional information on transportation infrastructure issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems (MITACS), a funding agency, was engaged, however the partnership fell through due to conflicting work schedules and timelines and as such this project has not been completed to date. The funding agency works as a broker between the Council and the researcher. Without their partnership Council was unable to identify a researcher to carry out the research.</li><li>✓ As council decided to submit a position paper without having completed the community based research project. This work will no longer be undertaken by the Council.</li></ul>

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Position paper developed	✓ Position paper was developed based on the community engagement and submitted to the Minister of Transportation and Works in winter 2010.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2010-11 Objective.

**2010-11 Objective:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council will have engaged with the provincial government to identify specific opportunities for action related to the maintenance or improvement of transportation infrastructure

**2010-11 Measure:**

- Provincial government engaged with to identify specific opportunities for action related to the maintenance or improvement of transportation infrastructure

**2010-11 Indicators:**

- Provincial government Engaged
- Opportunities identified for action

**9.3 Issue 3: Communication/Priority Process**

Regional Councils have the mandate to identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary changes required for regional sustainability. As a result, Regional Council members feel it is of critical importance that both the Provincial Government and citizens understand the process of how the Regional Council identifies prioritizes and investigates regional issues. Recognizing this, the Stephenville-Port aux Basques Regional Council decided to make Communication/Priority Process one of their issues in their 2008-11 Activity Plan.

**Goal:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Region Council will have established a process for identifying, prioritizing and investigating regional issues, including identifying mechanisms for improved communication with the provincial government and citizens.

**2009-10 Objective:**

By March 31, 2010, the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have evaluated the process to determine its effectiveness and whether or not changes need to be made or if an alternate process needs to be developed.

**Measure:**

Process evaluated

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Discussions held within the Council	✓ Due to the absence of a Regional Partnership Planner for the latter part of the fiscal year the regional council did not meet and as such the council did not achieve this indicator. This work will be carried out in 2010-11.
Process reviewed and evaluated	✓ Due to the absence of a Regional Partnership Planner for the latter part of the fiscal year the regional council did not meet and as such the council did not achieve this indicator. This work will be carried out in 2010-11.

Council will carry out the 2009-10 measure and indicators in 2010-11 along with the 2010-11 measure and indicators.

**2010-11 Objective:**

By March 31, 2011, the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have identified additional priority issues and opportunities with the intent of developing a regional perspective for submission to the provincial government.

**2010-11 Measure:**

- Additional priorities and opportunities identified with the intent of developing a regional perspective for submission to the provincial government.

**2009-10 Indicators:**

- Process reviewed and evaluated
- Discussions held within the Council
- Additional priorities and opportunities issues identified

## 10. Additional Highlights

The Stephenville-Port aux Basques 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 2009-10 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. The 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 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.

- ✓ In February 2010, Regional Council members participated in a pan provincial video conference with all 9 Regional Councils. The event focused on citizen engagement as the broad topic. The meeting utilized video conference equipment from the College of North Atlantic at 10 locations across the province as well as Turning Point Technologies, an audience response polling technology. This meeting in part was a test case to begin to see how such a model could work for cross regional discussion and dialogue.
- ✓ Two Regional Council members attended a learning event hosted by the Rural Secretariat in partnership with the College of the North Atlantic and Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in October 2009. This event looked at ways of conducting more rural research which would assist in providing more evidence based input into government.

## 11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

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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. It 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 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**

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 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 be a conduit for advice to government to advance efforts.

## **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, among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for it 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 it, 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

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## 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

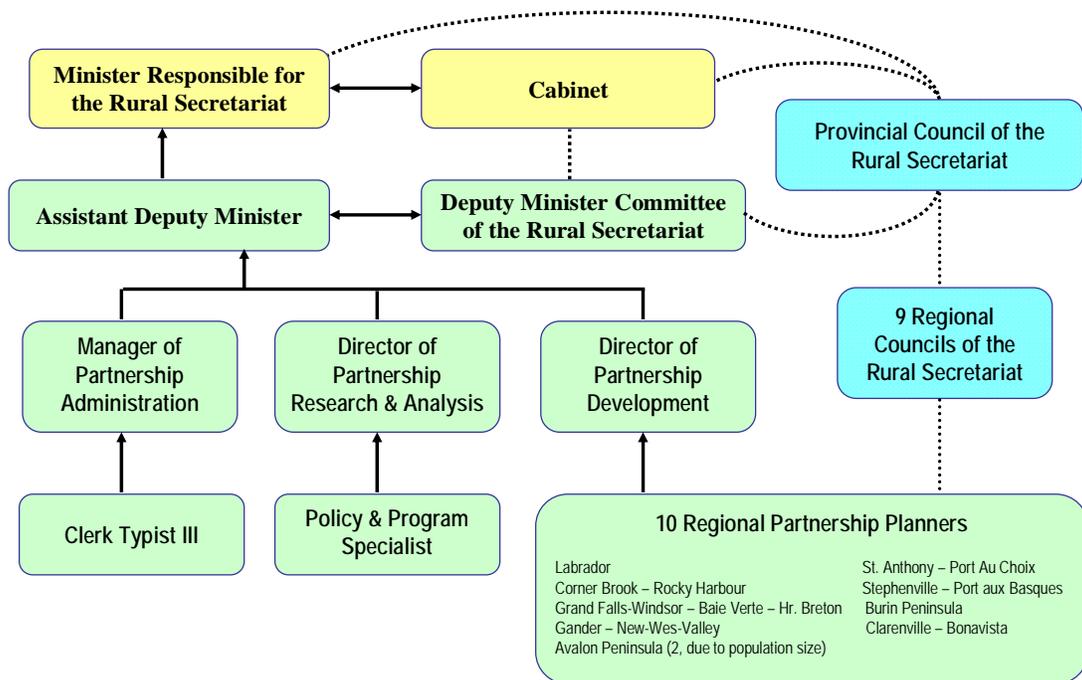
**Outcome Statement:** Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

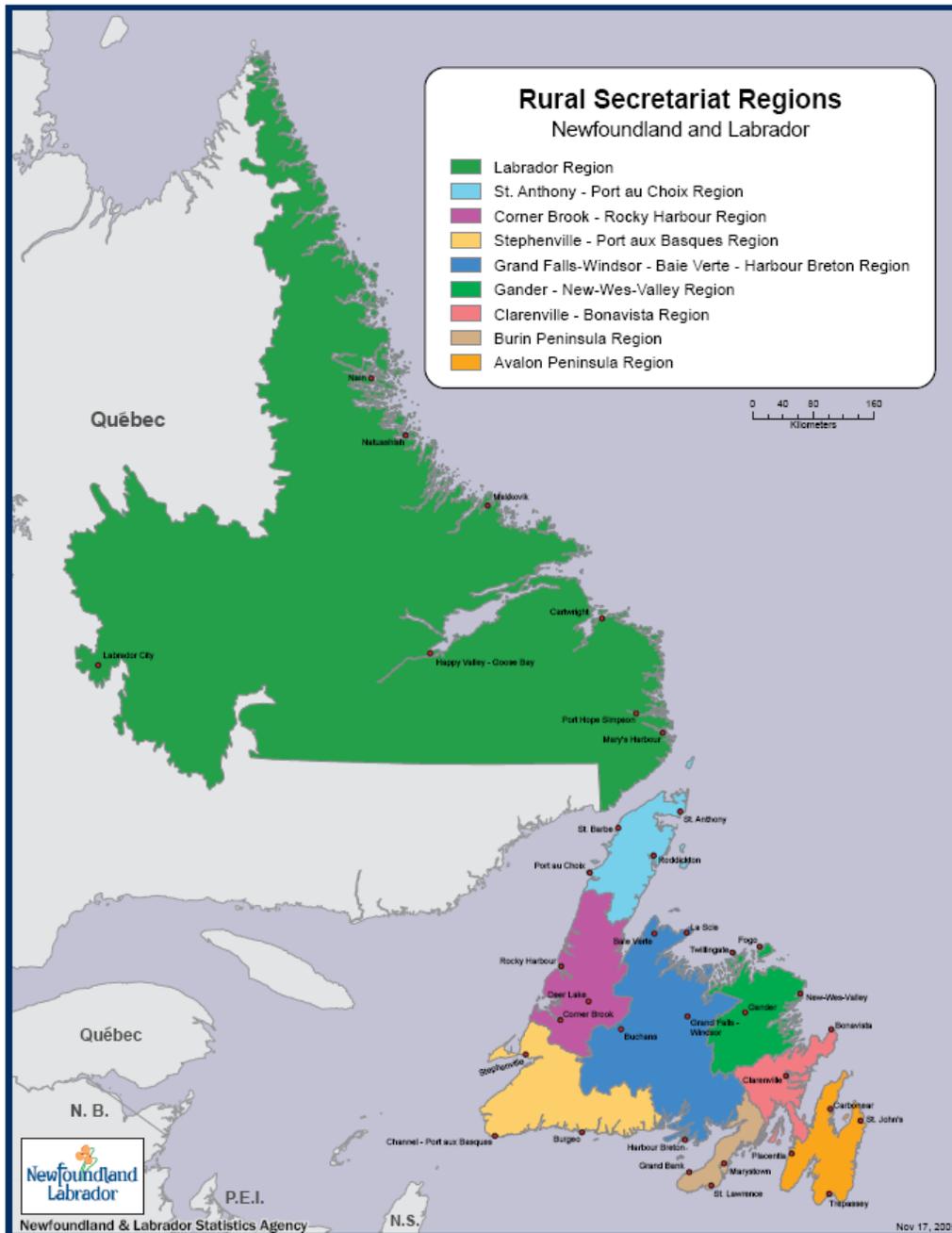
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

# Appendix B: Organizational Structure

## Rural Secretariat Structure



# Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



# Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

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## **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 Sam Organ



Photo Courtesy of Sam Organ



Photo Courtesy of Sam Organ



Photo Courtesy of Sam Organ



## Rural Secretariat

### **VACANT**

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