



**Clarenville—Bonavista
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council**

Annual Activity Report 2011-12



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As Chairperson for the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council, I hereby submit the Activity Report for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The period of time covered by this report extends from April 1, 2011 through to March 31, 2012. On behalf of the council, and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results reported.

During the past year, the council focused on its commitments as contained in the first year of the 2011-14 Activity Plan document.

Throughout the process, the council continued to engage government and community stakeholders. Consequently, it proved to be very busy and rewarding year with the council developing new understandings of the issues we hoped to address. During the year, council met five times to discuss issues relating to the fishery, affordable housing, regional economic development, support for the voluntary sector and the need to protect our cultural heritage and identity. Additionally, council followed with great interest the collaboration work that has been taking place in the Isthmus of Avalon region in relation to the Hebron project.

The council engaged many partners including government, academia and community stakeholders to support the council's continued efforts to understand the issues and submit well-informed policy advice to the Provincial Government. These conversations have helped the council in formulating its perspectives and in building a knowledge base as we seek to refine our policy advice.

In closing, I, on behalf of the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council, want to express our sincere thanks to the Provincial Government for its interest in our work and we look forward to continuing our collective efforts to support the sustainability of this diverse region.

Sincerely,



Janet Fay Matthews
Chair
Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

The 2011 Census population for Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region was 27,850. This represents a decline of 2.8 percent since 2006. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population increase of 1.8 percent since 2006 (514,536 in 2011, up from 505,470).

The 2007 gross income for every man, woman, and child (gross personal income per capita) in Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region was \$22,300. For the province, gross personal income per capita was \$24,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$15,000 for Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region in 2007. For the province it was \$16,400.

The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region was 71.6 percent. 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 2007 was 79.4 percent.

The unemployment rate in May 2006 for people between 18 and 64 years of age was 24.1 percent. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.5 percent. The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those between 18 and 64 years of age was 74.8 percent. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 76.7 percent.

The number of individuals in Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2010 was 2,525. The 1991 figure was 5,770.

Census 2006 reported 33.5 percent of people 18 to 64 years of age in Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1 percent of people in the entire province. About 66.5 percent of people in the region aged 18 to 64 had at least a High School diploma in 2006 compared to 74.9 percent in the province as a whole. In Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region about 7.1 percent of those people aged 18 to 64 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 13.3 percent in the province as a whole.

A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2009-2010, 62.5 percent (+/-7.1 percent) of individuals in Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status from very good to excellent. The provincial number in 2009-2010 was 60.1 percent (+/-1.6 percent). In 2009-2010, for Canada, 60.2 percent (+/-0.3 percent) 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.

2. REGIONAL COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Currently, the Clarenville - Bonavista 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 ten members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met five times in 2011-12.

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 Partnership Planner position in the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of the council and its work plan. The planner for the Clarenville - Bonavista region is Colin Holloway. The nature of this position requires that he travel extensively throughout the region and the province. Mr. Holloway's office is located at the Bonavista campus of the College of the North Atlantic.

Regional Council members	Community
Janet Fay Matthews (Chairperson)	Arnold's Cove
Lisa Browne	Clarenville
Marilyn Coles-Hayley	Elliston
Darryl Johnson	Port Union
Shelly Blackmore	Port Union
Don Mifflin	Bonavista
Violet Parsons	Bloomfield
Barry Pearce	Port Rexton
Edith Samson	Port Union
Mervin Wiseman (Provincial Council Representative)	North Harbour

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

3. MANDATE

The Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council's mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing a region.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity, etc.) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either a) advance b) negatively impact or c) 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 the economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To serve as a sounding board in their region for new or proposed initiatives.
- To select an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. LINES OF BUSINESS

The Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council supports the Rural Secretariat's four lines of business:

Citizen-based policy advice: The Rural Secretariat supports nine citizen-based Regional Councils, and one stakeholder-based Provincial Council, to develop policy and decision-making advice for submission to government. Typically, Councils, with the support of Rural Secretariat staff, hold public engagement sessions involving citizens and/or stakeholder group representatives, and conduct community-based research activities, to inform the development of advice documents.

Collaboration: The Rural Secretariat understands that collaboration is critical for sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The Rural Secretariat works to support existing rural collaborative processes such as partnerships. Other times they work to help convene new regional collaborative processes such as networks or alliances. The broad goal is to help build a strengthened 'culture of collaboration' in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Research: The Rural Secretariat collaborates with provincial partners on a number of formal research endeavors that help to improve understanding of the challenges facing, and opportunities available to, rural regions of this province. The Rural Secretariat also works directly with regional partners and Councils on a host of community-based research initiatives – small regional-level data-gathering efforts that give those involved the information and knowledge they need to effectively advise the Provincial Government on regional and rural policy issues.

Public dialogue and engagement: In addition to supporting Councils to conduct public engagement efforts, the Rural Secretariat is also available to assist other Provincial Government departments to design and deliver their own public engagement initiatives. The Rural Secretariat also periodically convenes special deliberative dialogue initiatives on themes deemed to be of particular importance to the rural sustainability of this province, often in partnership with rural stakeholder groups and other government departments.

5. VALUES

The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

Collaboration:	We are committed to building a culture of collaboration within Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond
Creativity/innovation:	We strive to transcend traditional ideas, rules, and patterns, and to work together to create new ideas, relationships, and approaches
Inclusion:	We acknowledge difference and cherish the views and perspectives of all. We take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their views
Learning culture:	We accept that we have a lot to learn and relish the opportunity to learn more
Participation/engagement:	We believe citizen/stakeholder/community engagement is essential to the development of good public policy
Teamwork:	We provide support to one another, work co-operatively, respect differing views and strive to make our work environments safe and enjoyable
Honesty:	We are open and honest in all our dealings and maintain the highest integrity at all times
Excellence:	We strive for excellence and quality in everything we do

6. PRIMARY CLIENTS

The primary clients of the Clarenville – Bonavista Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the Provincial Government, and communities.

The council also engages individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. VISION

The Clarenville – Bonavista Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Vibrant rural regions and communities where collaborative organizations and engaged and informed citizens work closely with governments to advance rural sustainability

Through its work, the council identifies priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. MISSION

The Clarenville – Bonavista Regional Council supports the mission of the Rural Secretariat:

By March 31, 2017, the Rural Secretariat will have worked with regional and departmental partners to improve the sustainability prospects of rural communities and regions.

The Regional Council is committed to supporting the mission of the Provincial Rural Secretariat by fostering positive relationships between Provincial Government departments and rural communities, providing an avenue for public engagement on issues of importance to rural sustainability and conducting community-based research to inform on policy advice processes impacting critical rural issues.

9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

In its 2011-14 Activity Plan, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council identified one objective: *to provide ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region*. The activities and performance of the council with respect to this objective for 2011-12, as outlined below, are in keeping with the council's mandate, as well as support the Provincial Government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). To ensure that the Regional Council is properly informed and adequately prepared in developing its advice to Government it will make use of any one of a number of tools to assist in its work as it deems appropriate. In keeping with the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, these tools include, but are not limited to, research activities and citizen engagement which provide input into council's policy advice document submissions.

In keeping with this objective, the council will report on the same objective for each year in the 2011-14 planning cycle.

9.1 Issue: Provide Advice to Government

The Clarenville – Bonavista Regional Council believes the protection of culture, identity and place is crucial to long-term sustainability. Rural communities are changing due to the impacts of population shifts, the identification of a need to share resources and the loss of some industries. While the Regional Council is supportive of efforts by the Provincial Government to assist rural communities with collaboration activities, provincial programs, services and policies are necessary to protect the unique culture, identity and place we often refer to as rural.

Objective: By March 31, 2012 Council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government on one issue that relates to regional sustainability.

Measure: Provided advice

Indicators	Accomplishments
Issue Identified	The Regional Council identified the protection of culture, identity and place as the main policy advice issue for 2011-12.
Researched issue	<p>Early in 2010, the Regional Council engaged, through open dialogue, municipal leaders regarding its 2010 policy advice on “Community-based Leadership and Collaborative Practices in Rural Newfoundland Labrador” (Nov. 2010) to see how local efforts to share resources and improve collaboration between rural communities were being impacted. As a result of reviewing the comments received from municipal leaders and local not-for-profit organizations, the council decided to explore the impact collaborative efforts were having on the protection of local culture, community identity, and the location of rural communities as the topic for its 2011-12 policy advice submission.</p> <p>Furthermore, in keeping with this objective, and to assist in council’s understanding of the issues, the council also reviewed the commitments of the current government with specific reference to commitments on: municipal governance; the promotion of culture and heritage; and possible linkages to the provincial tourism strategy.</p> <p>Finally, the council also researched the policy and guidelines within the Provincial Signage Policy as governed by the Department of Transportation and Works. It was the council’s opinion that the names contained on provincial signs are closely linked to community identity.</p> <p>Next, to aid in the council’s understanding of the issues involved in the protection of culture, identity and place, a draft discussion paper was developed and shared with municipal leaders, the Discovery Regional Development Board of</p>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>Directors and officials working with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador.</p> <p>In reviewing the contents of the discussion document, the Regional Council further discussed how the efforts to promote regional collaboration would impact (positively or negatively) the unique culture and identity residents cherish in many of the small, rural communities.</p> <p>Hence, after much discussion and deliberation, the fundamental question for the council was, <i>“How can we ensure the protection of culture, identity and place while seeking to advance Newfoundland and Labrador as a world-class destination, encourage regional collaboration between rural communities, instill a value of efficiency in program and service delivery, maintain community pride and build upon best practices in community economic development?”</i></p> <p>In some instances, the council felt the need to advance regional cooperation and collaboration was in competition (as a philosophy) with the need to maintain Newfoundland and Labrador’s unique culture and heritage.</p> <p>As a final step in the community engagement process, the council presented its discussion paper at the March, 2012 Municipal Symposium at Port Blandford. During this interactive session, 38 local leaders engaged in a dialogue about the key ideas presented in the paper.</p> <p>The council also used, through the assistance of the Rural Secretariat, new technology (i.e., Turning Point Technology software) which provided workshop participants the opportunity to prioritize and provide instant feedback on the discussion document.</p> <p>Following the March 2012 interactive session, the discussion document was updated and the information captured at the workshop was incorporated into the council’s policy advice submission to the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs.</p> <p>At the end of this research process, the Regional Council concluded that as communities continue to collaborate and in some cases, amalgamate, it is critical that they do not lose the unique names associated with culture and heritage. Furthermore, while it is important for communities to come together to share resources, reduce duplication in administrative costs and/or to explore innovative ways to</p>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>attract large scale industrial support, collectively, we, as Newfoundland and Labradorians, must not lose sight of unique community names and the valuable history behind them. Finally, the council felt the community service sector must also continue to have a role in keeping our culture and heritage alive.</p>
<p>Agreed upon advice to Government</p>	<p>The council held four meetings, including a special teleconference, to review and agree upon the policy advice recommendations.</p> <p>These recommendations include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Provincial Government, in consultation with Municipalities Newfoundland Labrador, develop a culture, identity and place framework which can be shared with community stakeholders seeking to explore collaborative opportunities. 2. The Provincial Government review the communication plan associated with the Provincial Tourism Strategy to ensure there is consistency for how it supports communities working towards the protection of rural culture and heritage. 3. The Provincial Government develop and apply a <i>culture, identity and place lens</i> to ensure that all policies and programs do not negatively impact rural communities or local areas.
<p>Communicated advice to Government</p>	<p>In March 2011, the Regional Council submitted a policy advice document entitled, "<i>The Protection of Culture, Identity and Place</i>", to the Department of Municipal Affairs.</p> <p>A copy of this document was also sent to the Departments of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and Transportation and Works. Finally, a copy of the advice document was sent to the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat.</p>

Discussion of Results: The Regional Council is pleased with its efforts to advance policy recommendations to the Provincial Government on the protection of culture, identity and place. The process council followed has allowed it to re-engage municipal and local organizational leaders on previous policy advice submissions and to explore additional impacts their work is having on local communities.

10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, some 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 January 2012, Fire and Emergency Services of Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL) approached all Regional Councils, including the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council, in an effort to gain valuable input into the establishment of a Provincial 911 System. The council participated in roundtable discussions as they dialogued on several design questions posed by the FES-NL Agency. The council was presented with a discussion document which provided valuable information about how 911 systems currently operate in the province. Through the engagement process, the council was asked to respond to questions related to the implementation of a province-wide 911 system. Specifically, the dialogue centered on several issues including, the need for residential and commercial address changes for rural regions, as well as the development of a user-pay system. The council also provided advice on what barriers or infrastructural issues need to be considered/addressed in a province-wide 911 system to ensure it will be effective for rural regions and communities.

The results of the advice were presented, in real-time, to officials working with FES-NL and a final report also submitted by all Regional Councils to that agency.

Additionally, in March 2012, the council partnered with the Discovery Regional Development Board to host a one-day workshop on the identification of new opportunities in the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery. Council viewed the fishery forum as a follow-up to its 2011 letter of correspondence sent to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture whereby it offered to engage the community on issues impacting the future of the fishery and provide advice back to the Provincial Government.

The March event was attended by approximately 35 fishers (harvesters and processors), municipal leaders, economic development leaders, local politicians and members of the Regional Council. The information received at the workshop has informed the council's understanding of the many issues impacting the fishery. This information will also assist in the planning of a subsequent community engagement process which the council is hoping to host in the fall 2012.

Finally, the council has been keenly interested in the impact the Hebron Project at the Bull Arm Site is having on the Clarenville and Isthmus sub-region. To assist in its understanding of the issues and the challenges, the council attended a Harris Centre Regional Workshop in Port Blandford which included an interactive dialogue session whereby research information was presented to delegates. Captured in the information were recommendations for how local communities can take best advantage of large-scale industrial development projects while also taking steps to mitigate the negative impacts on housing, infrastructure, labour force pushes and pulls, and other social issues.

The council has been considering this information as it seeks new opportunities to engage the Provincial Government about the positive and negative impacts on mega development projects for the Clarendville - Bonavista region.

1 1. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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 the Provincial Government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

In 2011-2012, the council initiated a dialogue process with four departments of the Provincial Government. This engagement was based upon a set of priority theme areas which its members felt important to the Clarendville - Bonavista region and to the Province. The priority areas included: regional economic development, the fishery, housing and the voluntary non-profit sector.

The council is continuing to explore these theme areas with respective departments. In 2012-2013, the council will continue its engagement process which aims to further define specific public policy sub-themes which can be researched and acted upon.

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 be a conduit for advice to government to advance efforts.

In keeping with both opportunities, the council will continue to keep itself informed on regional collaboration efforts within and external to the region aiming to find new opportunities to further inform Government and various community stakeholders.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to the Provincial 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 the council is to clearly and effectively 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:** Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

Outcome Statement: A sustainable rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

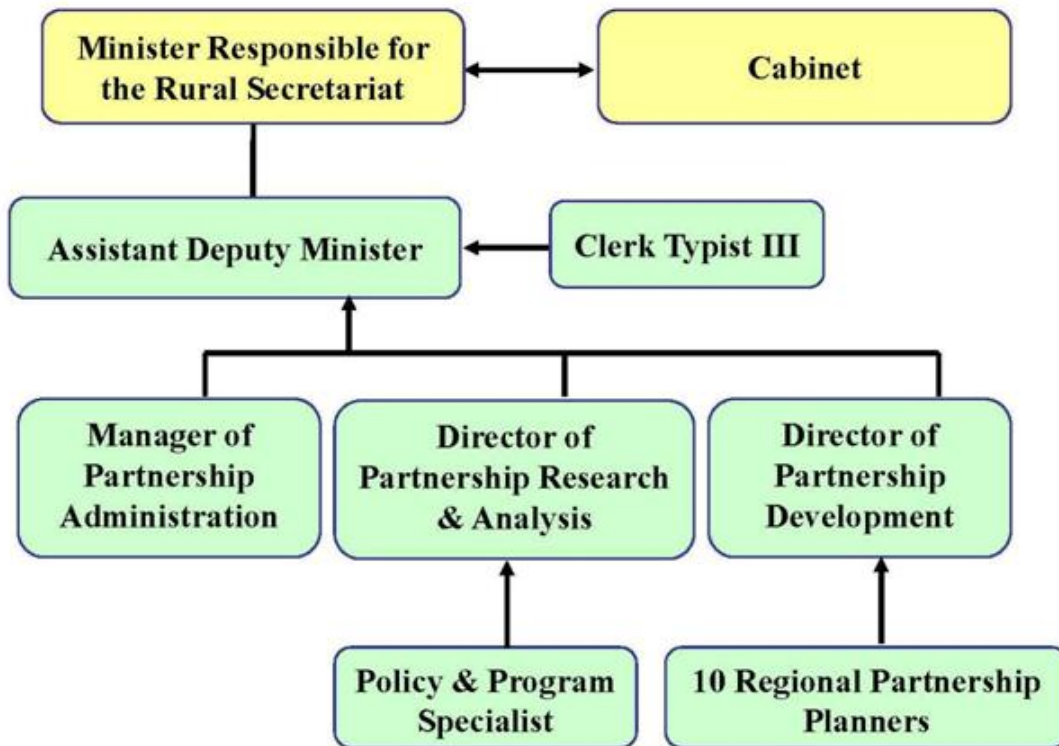
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Rural Secretariat in the areas of:

- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

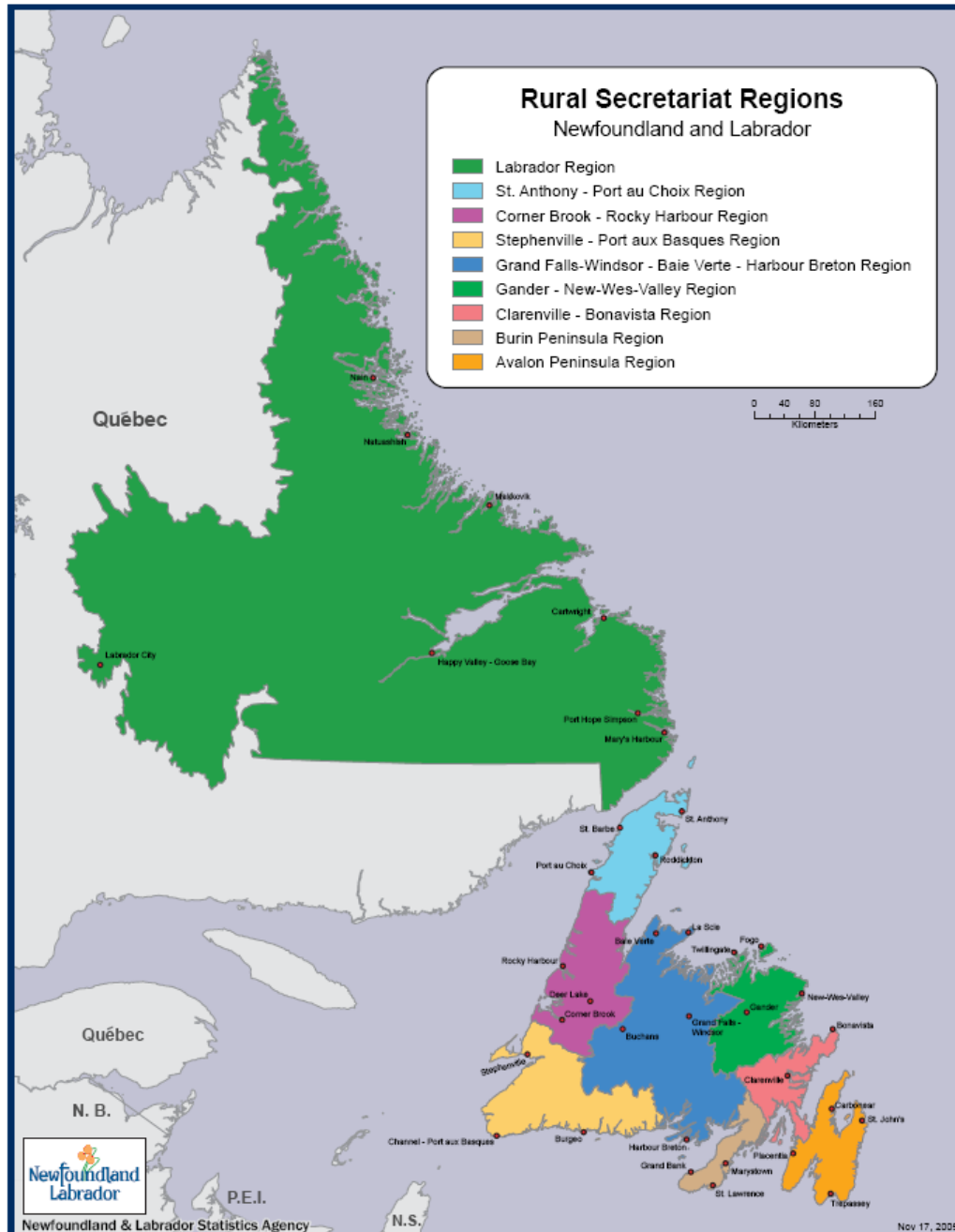
Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is:
	addressed in the Council's activity plan
1. Citizen-based policy advice	✓
2. Public dialogue and engagement	✓
3. Collaboration	✓
4. Research	✓

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Rural Secretariat Organizational Chart



APPENDIX C: MAP OF RURAL SECRETARIAT REGIONS



APPENDIX D: MANDATES OF RURAL SECRETARIAT AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of rural Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach aimed at integrating economic, social, cultural aspects of rural and 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 rural concerns are considered throughout the Provincial Government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.
- Promote awareness of provincial and federal programs and services regarding rural communities.

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 Province.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, Employment Income 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 a) advance, b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To 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 Credits:



Courtesy of Cindy Bailey



Courtesy of Edith Samson



Courtesy of Edward Vincent



Rural Secretariat

Colin Holloway

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