



Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour  
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat  
Executive Council  
Annual Activity Report 2010-11



# Message from the Co-Chairs

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As Chairpersons for the Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Regional Council, we hereby submit the activity report for the period April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, our signatures are indicative of the council's accountability for the results reported.

We consider that this Regional Council has had a very successful year in establishing and delivering the goals for the region. We have managed to achieve our goals for this year and for the 2008-11 Activity Plan and have submitted policy advice to the Provincial Government in our priority areas of education, transportation and health.

Regarding education; our policy advice focused strongly on the need for increasing access to schools as a community resource, equalizing access for all post-secondary students by reducing access gaps for rural students, further developing our post-secondary institutions and their infrastructure, programs and staff and ensuring increased access to broadband services in all communities as a tool for facilitating learning.

Our advice on transportation highlighted: the need for a feasibility study into a fixed link between Newfoundland and Labrador, concerns over the existing Marine Atlantic service, the desire to see increased provision of passing lanes and communications infrastructure along Route 430 and the requirement for equal access to broadband services by communities in the region.

Finally, our advice letter on health identified the following priorities: preventative healthcare programs, health promotion, identification of core health services and planning for rural and regional demographic changes and impacts.

In addition to these three focus areas, the council has also participated in relevant regional and provincial forums, community-based research projects and has submitted additional advice to government regarding issues of importance in our region.

We look forward to having further dialogue on many of these issues over the coming year, and also to providing policy advice on additional focus areas, as we are guided by our new activity plan for 2011-14.

Sincerely,



Don Downer                                      and      Colleen Kennedy  
Co-Chairs, Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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# 1. Overview of the Region

The 2006 Census population for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was 45,730. This represents an increase of 0.5% 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).

The 2007 gross income for every man, woman, and child (gross personal income per capita) in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was \$23,400. For the province, gross personal income per capita was \$24,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$15,600 for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region in 2007. For the province, after tax personal income per capita was \$16,400.

Half of the couple families in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$57,600 in 2007. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$61,800.

Half of the lone parent families in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$26,300 in 2007. Half of the lone parent families in the province had incomes of more than \$27,500.

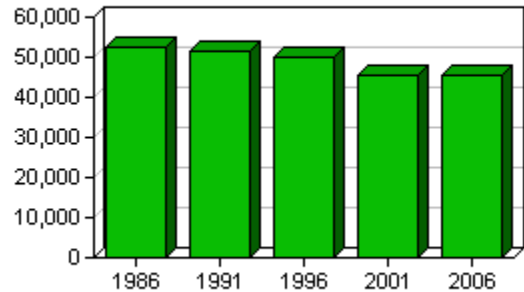
The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region was 77.1%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. A higher self-reliance ratio indicates a lower dependency. The self-reliance ratio in the province was 79.4%.

According to the 2006 Census, in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region 79.3% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

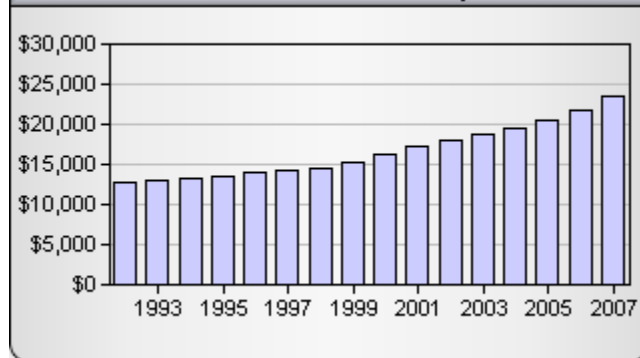
The unemployment rate during the reference week of the 2006 Census for people between 18 and 64 years of age was 19.3%. The provincial unemployment rate during the reference week of the 2006 Census was 18.5%.

In Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region, the employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those between 18 and 64 years of age was 76.5%. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 76.7%.

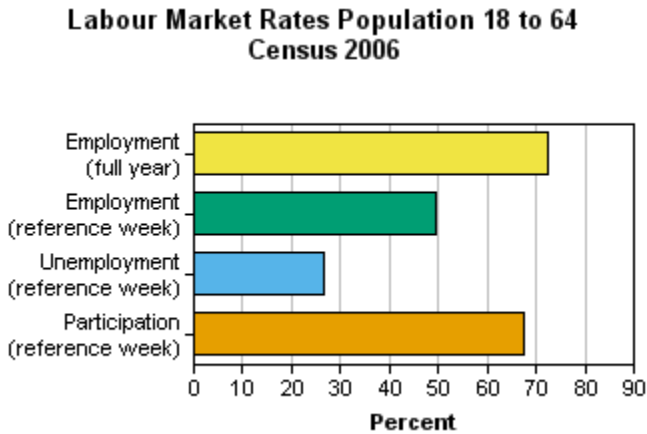
**Population**



**Personal Income Per Capita**



The number of individuals in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in 2010 was 4,415. For 1991, the figure was 7,945.



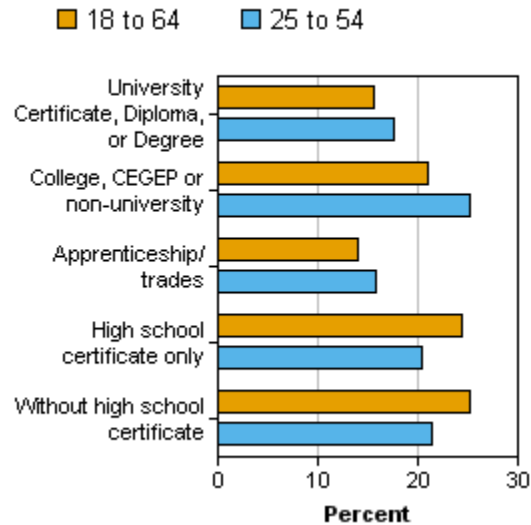
The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region who were in families receiving Income Support Assistance in 2010 was 1,215. For 1991, the figure was 3,145.

Census 2006 reported that 25.1% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region about 14.3% 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 Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region, 87.2% 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, Census 2006**



A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2009-2010, 15.1% (+/- 3.5%) of individuals age 12 and over in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as excellent. 40.9% (+/- 4.8%) of individuals age 12 and over in Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as very good.

For the province, 16.2% (+/- 1.2%) of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as excellent; 43.9% (+/- 1.6%) rated their health status as very good.

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

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The Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council is comprised of six members; four female and two male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including three members from communities of less than 5,000 people.

<b>Regional Council members</b>	<b>Community</b>
Bertha Brophy	Daniel's Harbour
Joan Cranston	Norris Point
Don Downer (Co-Chair)	Corner Brook
Colleen Kennedy (Co-Chair)	Rocky Harbour
Cyril Kirby	Deer Lake
Carla Wells	Corner Brook

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

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 facilitates the work of the council. The planner for the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour region is Marion McCahon. The regional office is located within the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development Offices in the Millbrook Mall, Corner Brook.

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.

## 3. Mandate

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The 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

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The 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 sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador can be significantly advanced through more and better collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments. Sometimes 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 endeavours 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

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The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council are as follows:

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

## 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 Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour 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 has identified priorities that contribute to regional sustainability and which consider the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects. Specifically, council has supported the vision for regional sustainability by researching and providing policy advice documents in the areas of transportation and communication, education, health and labour market development.

## 8. Mission

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The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the three-year objectives which the council worked towards as they moved forward on the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as stated in the 2008-11 Activity Plan. Council worked to successfully develop partnerships within the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour region as it engaged with the community and with the Provincial Government. In addition, council identified and focused on key priorities and through engagement sessions, research and the submission of advice documents enhanced a clearer understanding of those priorities.

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.**

**Measure:** Participated in an ongoing community engagement process

Indicators	Accomplishments
A long-term vision of sustainability for the region will have been submitted to the Provincial Government and shared with citizens	In 2007, council created a long-term vision of sustainability for their region which members articulated in the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council Vision Development document. This document helps achieve the strategic direction: 'Assessment of policy on regional sustainability' by providing government with regional perspectives and a vision to inform policy development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Vision document was shared with citizens through</li></ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>community engagements and regional partners. For example, it was distributed at an education forum held in Corner Brook and at a Community Advisory Committee Conference at Marble Mountain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was also submitted to the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat and is now published online for the general public at: <a href="http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications/Vision-CornerBrookDec11_2007.pdf">http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications/Vision-CornerBrookDec11_2007.pdf</a>. A hard copy can be obtained upon request.</li> </ul>
<p>Enhanced regional input will have been provided into policy development and decision-making processes of the Provincial Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research and provision of advice documents to government is the main vehicle by which the council works to enhance regional input</li> <li>• Prior to 2008, the council had not submitted advice documents or regional input affecting policy development and decision-making processes</li> <li>• Since April 1, 2008, the council has submitted advice documents to the Departments of Education, Health and Community Services (HCS), Transportation and Works (TW), Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE), and the Rural Secretariat. They have also provided regional input for provincial strategies including the Youth Attraction and Retention Strategy. Advice documents have been submitted to Ministers directly responsible for these departments or chairpersons accountable for specific strategies. These advice documents help achieve the strategic directions of government by providing regional perspectives to inform policy development.</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities and mechanisms will have been provided to enhance two-way communication between the Provincial Government and citizens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through regional engagement sessions such as the education and transportation forums, held during the last three years, opportunities have been provided for enhanced communication. Examples of this include the participation at these sessions by Provincial Government representatives and regional stakeholders and citizens. These forums help to achieve the strategic directions of government by providing opportunities for informed discussion and priority identification on regional issues and also providing opportunities for partnership development involving key regional stakeholders and government.</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
Community engagement sessions will have been conducted at the regional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As mentioned above, community engagement sessions have been carried out by the Regional Council over the last three years. These have included a joint education forum held in Corner Brook and a transportation forum held in St. Paul's. These sessions provided the opportunity for council to engage with key stakeholders in both the transportation and education communities.</li> </ul>
Citizens and stakeholders will have been informed about the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on regional sustainability has been provided to and discussed by citizens and stakeholders at many different forums and partner and public meetings over the last three years. Examples of these include: meetings with Regional Economic Development Boards, Western Health, Western School District, joint council meetings, municipalities and academic institutions such as College of the North Atlantic (CNA) and Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland. This information included presentations on key regional indicators, dialogue and discussion on council focus and priorities and distribution of the detailed vision document for the region. This provision of information helps to meet the government strategic directions by creating a starting point for informed discussion and priority identification on regional issues.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:** In light of the above accomplishments, council has been able to meet its mission. The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council is pleased with their community engagement work and achievement of their mission as outlined in the 2008-11 Activity Plan.

## 9. Report on Performance

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, are 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' views on regional and rural sustainability. Through its advice documents to government, the council also provided regional perspectives with the aim of influencing public policy related to rural and regional sustainability.

### 9.1 Issue 1: Access to quality transportation infrastructure and services

In order to develop, maintain and increase rural competitiveness in a local and global economy, the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council recognized the necessity of having access to safe, efficient and modern transportation infrastructure and services, inclusive of air, land and marine services. This was and continues to be of great importance to tourism, manufacturing and overall social and economic development in the region. Council has carried out research, facilitated dialogue with stakeholders in the region and has developed advice which is aimed at improving access to transportation infrastructure and services.

**Goal:** By 2011, the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council will have informed Provincial Government policy on issues related to access to air, land and marine transportation.

**Measure:** Gathered and communicated information to the Provincial Government

Indicators	Accomplishments
Information gathered related to air, land and sea transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on transportation was gathered via a Transportation Forum (held September 19-20, 2008) hosted by the Harris Centre and held at St. Paul's. Presenters from the Department of Transportation and Works, Memorial University, and the Deer Lake Airport Authority helped outline issues and policies for air, land and marine transportation in the region and the province at large. Discussion at this session saw participating councils and attendees reviewing the latest research and strategies, analyzing the policy options and issues for transportation. As a result of the forum and identification of policy issues, the Regional Council established that maintaining access to quality transportation infrastructure and services is a priority focus of its work.</li> <li>• Through follow-up discussions and correspondence by the regional planner, the Regional Council was kept informed of additional community issues regarding transportation. Follow-up actions initiated include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Correspondence with community organizations, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Regional Economic Development Boards, municipalities, and business organizations (Chambers of Commerce)</li> <li>○ Briefing to co-chairperson by Regional Economic Development Board (REDB) staff concerning a multi-REDB transportation study</li> <li>○ Council member participation in transportation study meetings</li> <li>○ Regional planner's attendance at information session on Tourism Orientated Directional</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>Signage (TODS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional Council members also held discussions with members in their respective communities, confirming the need for maintaining access to quality transportation infrastructure and services, particularly related to cost effectiveness for citizens and businesses.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The council submitted a position paper to the Minister of Transportation and Works in September 2009. This paper highlighted key issues identified during the transportation forum and associated follow-up with stakeholders. The paper included reference to air, land and marine infrastructure and highlighted as key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The need for improvements of the existing Marine Atlantic ferry service.</li> <li>○ The requirement for a full scale feasibility study on the fixed link between Newfoundland and Labrador.</li> <li>○ The requirement for widening of Route 430 (Viking Trail) to allow for passing lanes, particularly given the anticipated increase in traffic, as a result of the opening of the Trans-Labrador Highway.</li> <li>○ The desire to see enhanced international air services from Deer Lake to improve the attractiveness of the airport for business, tourism and domestic travel.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Council received a response to their advice document in October 2009. Following this response, in 2010, the council met again with key stakeholders and determined changes, updates and new developments related to transportation. This was then followed by the development and communication of an updated position paper to government in March 2011. Additional information on this updated position paper is provided under the 2010-11 reporting objective.</li> </ul>

**2010-11 Objective:** By 2011 Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council will have developed and communicated a position paper to the Provincial Government concerning access to quality air, land and marine transportation infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability.

**Measure:** Communicated a position paper to the Provincial Government concerning access to quality air, land and marine transportation infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
Invite key stakeholders to meet with council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council invited the Executive Director of the Red Ochre Regional Economic Development Board to meet with them (March 24, 2011), to provide an update on the latest developments with the AMEC 'Trans-Labrador Highway Transportation Impacts and Business Opportunities Report' and the associated Transportation Working Group.</li> <li>● On Council's behalf the planner also met with Jamie Schwartz (Deer Lake Airport Authority) and liaised with Department of Transportation and Works officials regarding monitoring of road traffic in the region.</li> </ul>
Review new and on-going transportation research and relevant strategic plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council reviewed recent research documents including the AMEC Trans-Labrador report, the provincial Air Access Strategy and information related to new developments with Marine Atlantic. Council considered their recommendations as they related to the initial transportation advice document and any recommendations to be provided in the updated advice document.</li> </ul>
Position paper communicated to the Provincial Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The council submitted a position paper to the Minister of Transportation and Works in September 2009 (details related to this can be found in the previous table).</li> <li>● Council developed and communicated an updated position paper to government in March 2011. Key focus areas of this document included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Air Services - the need for continued support to develop international air routes and associated tourism opportunities. The document also highlighted the increasing cost of air travel within the province and its impact on residents of the region.</li> <li>○ Marine Atlantic – concern over costs, scheduling and customer service associated with the ferry service.</li> <li>○ Fixed Link – continued support for a full scale feasibility study into a fixed link between Newfoundland and Labrador</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Route 430 – the need for increased provision of passing lanes and upgrading of cell phone and internet infrastructure along this route.</li> <li>○ Broadband – the need for equal access to opportunities for communities in the region to access broadband service.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:** In light of the above accomplishments, Council has been able to meet its goals regarding access to quality transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation and communications infrastructure (particularly access to cell phone, high speed / broadband services) continues to be an important priority for our region and its economic and social development.

### 9.2 Issue 2: Regionalism – Ensuring access to quality education infrastructure and services

The ability of a rural region to be economically competitive in a local and global market place requires a population that is of sufficient size, sufficiently educated, and which offers a diversity of skills to meet the supply and demand of the labour market. The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council recognized that in order to retain and attract people, quality of life issues are a significant part of the decision to settle in an area. This includes access to quality education infrastructure and services. Over the last three years, council has carried out research, facilitated dialogue with education stakeholders in the region and has developed advice which is aimed at improving access to quality education infrastructure and services throughout the region.

**Goal:** By 2011 the Corner Brook – Rocky-Harbour Regional Council will have informed Provincial Government policy on issues related to regional decision making on education infrastructure and services

**Measure:** Gathered and communicated information to the Provincial Government

Indicators	Accomplishments
Information gathered and communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information on education issues was gathered via an education forum, engaging with key stakeholders and citizens and reviewing the latest research and strategies related to education in the region.</li> <li>● As an initial step, the council held meetings with senior education leaders of Western School District, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland, College of the North Atlantic and Academy Canada to discuss key education issues within the region. Representatives from these institutions made presentations to council which included an overview of each institution, key priorities and challenges, along</li> </ul>



Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>with the identification of future opportunities and developments. Notes from these meetings were recorded, analyzed and discussed at regular council meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2008-11 Strategic Plans of the major educational institutions were also collected and circulated to council members for reference, reflection and discussion</li> <li>• The council then organized and participated in an education forum (held March 19-20, 2009) which was attended by Memorial University Faculty of Education, the Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic, Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Community Education Network, Western School District, Central Nova School District, as well as Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton, Stephenville – Port aux Basques and Labrador Regional Councils. Notes, breakout group recommendations and individual feedback forms from the education forum were collected and analyzed. Stakeholder data from the education community was collected during the education forum. This included information on key rural education issues such a declining school enrolments, school consolidation, community school concept, bussing, small school program offerings and online learning. Participants focused on identifying key challenges and opportunities in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Families, communities and education</li> <li>○ Educational access and infrastructure</li> <li>○ Primary, elementary and secondary education</li> <li>○ Education programs for rural regions</li> <li>○ Digital learning and infrastructure</li> <li>○ Post-secondary education.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Through follow-up discussions, correspondence and attendance at workshops and information sessions, the regional planner and the council were kept informed of community issues regarding education.</li> <li>• Correspondence and/or collaboration with stakeholders such as Grenfell Campus of Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic, Western School District, Community Education Network, Academy Canada, regional economic development boards as well as newly identified groups (Central Nova School District, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, and Western Health) on educational issues</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>has been initiated or maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Council members also held discussions with members in their communities confirming the need for improving access to quality education infrastructure and services, particularly related to access to educational programs through technology enhancements .</li> <li>• The council utilized the information gathered to develop their position paper to government. This was communicated to government in March 2011. Further information on the position paper is highlighted below.</li> </ul>

**2010-11 Objective:** By 2011 Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council will have developed and communicated a position paper to the Provincial Government concerning regional decision making as it relates to access to quality education infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability.

**Measure:** Position Paper developed and communicated to the Provincial Government concerning regional decision making as it relates to access to quality education infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
Position paper developed	<p>Based on issues highlighted via the education forum, stakeholder engagement and follow-up correspondence, council identified the key issues and recommendations to be incorporated in its position paper to government. The paper included the following key focus areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increasing access to schools as a community resource by: considering community needs when designing new schools, utilising the community schools model, increasing funding for late bussing, creation of specialist staff positions to develop community partnerships, greater partnerships between government departments.</li> <li>2) Equalizing access for all post-secondary students by reducing access gaps for rural students (resulting from higher costs), increased high school completion programming in rural areas and improved transfer options between institutions.</li> <li>3) Developing the post-secondary institutions via increased access to funding to develop and renew</li> </ol>

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
	<p>infrastructure, programs and to hire specialist staff, funding to support increased research and the future development of additional programs, services and investment to meet regional needs.</p> <p>4) Increased access to broadband services in all communities as a tool for learning.</p>
Position paper communicated to Provincial Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This position paper was communicated to the Department of Education in March 2011.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:** In light of the above accomplishments, council has been able to meet its goals and objectives regarding access to quality education infrastructure and services, and is pleased with the work delivered to move forward this priority.

### 9.3 Issue 3: Regionalism – Ensuring access to quality health infrastructure and services

Access to health infrastructure and services affects the quality of life of every citizen in the region. In some cases, citizens are often forced to make choices between their personal or family health and providing for basic needs. Travel to health service centres puts real and immediate demands on the social and economic resources of families, especially in rural areas. The Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council recognized that quality of life issues are a significant part of the decision to settle or remain in an area, including access to quality health infrastructure and services. Over the last three years, Council has carried out research and identified key issues for further consideration and advice development regarding access to quality health infrastructure and services.

**Goal:** By 2011 the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council will have informed Provincial Government policy on issues related to regional decision making as it relates to accessing health infrastructure and services.

**Measure:** Gathered and communicated information to the Provincial Government

Indicators	Accomplishments
Information gathered and communicated	<p>Information on health infrastructure and services was gathered via engaging with key stakeholders and reviewing the latest research and strategies related to health in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An initial, introductory meeting was held with Western Health senior management attended by a regional council co-chairperson, a regional council member, and three regional planners from western Newfoundland. This was followed in September 2009 by a regional meeting attended by Regional Council members and</li> </ul>

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>Western Health staff including the primary healthcare managers and the Regional Director for Health Promotion and Primary Healthcare. This meeting introduced the role of the Rural Secretariat, discussed potential opportunities for research partnering, information on key community health initiatives and community engagement on health issues. Results of this meeting with Western Health were discussed at the following regional council meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Health’s 2008-11 Strategic Plan was collected and circulated to council members for reference, reflection and discussion.</li> <li>• Through follow-up discussions and correspondence by the regional planner, Regional Council was kept informed of community issues regarding health infrastructure and services. Correspondence was maintained with Western Health Corporation staff on regional health care issues.</li> <li>• Regional Council members held discussions with members of their communities, confirming the need for maintaining or improving access to quality health infrastructure and services.</li> <li>• A member of council and the regional planner also attended a Western Health Community Advisory Committee Conference, held at Marble Mountain (October 16, 2010) to identify additional healthcare concerns and solutions and to listen to information provided by Western Health staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Following this, council established a health working group to begin to identify key issues and to make recommendations to the council on considerations for policy advice to government.</li> <li>• Issues identified were discussed by the council and an advice letter was drafted. This advice letter was communicated to the Department of Health in March 2011. Further information on the advice document is highlighted in the table below.</li> </ul>

**2010-11 Objective:** By March 31, 2011 Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council will have developed and communicated a position paper to the Provincial Government concerning regional decision making as it relates to access to quality health infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability.

**Measure:** Position paper developed and communicated to the Provincial Government concerning regional decision making as it relates to access to quality health infrastructure and services required for regional sustainability.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
Community stakeholder data collected regarding health care infrastructure and services requirements	<p>Council collected the following community stakeholder data, in order to inform the development of its policy advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Western Health Primary Health Care Proposals and Environmental Scan for communities in the region. These documents contained community stakeholder data - both statistical (from census and additional surveys) and information collected during community consultations, held as part of the proposal development process.</li> <li>○ The planner and a council member attended the Community Advisory Committee conference (October 16, 2010) which provided information and data on key issues for communities related to health promotion and preventative care.</li> <li>○ A Health Working Group was established (members include a representative(s) from Western Health, the Regional Council and a local Community Advisory Committee) and helped to identify relevant information and community perspectives on regional health issues.</li> <li>○ Dr. Jill Allison also participated at a Regional Council meeting to update the Council on the findings of her recent research into healthcare in rural regions of the Province.</li> </ul>
Information regarding regional decision making models and issues gathered and analyzed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This indicator was not achieved – this is as a result of the council’s decision to focus on regional issues with healthcare services and infrastructure rather than the associated decision making models. It was felt that it would be difficult to access accurate information on these models and also to provide effective advice, given that the models may be designed and delivered by Western Health, while the council’s advice is submitted to the Department of Health.</li> </ul>
Position paper developed and submitted to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Issues identified were discussed by Council and an advice letter was drafted. This highlighted the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preventative healthcare programs</li> <li>○ Health promotion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identification of core services for regional and rural health centres</li> <li>○ Planning for rural and regional demographic changes and impacts on community health care.</li> <li>● Council proposed two strategies to address these priorities:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Local engagement sessions with community members and stakeholders to seek consensus on priority regional health issues and to identify further recommendations</li> <li>2) A Provincial Health Forum – to address provincial health issues.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● This advice letter was communicated to the Department of Health in March 2011.</li> </ul>

**Discussion of Results:** In light of the above accomplishments, Council has been able to identify key issues of significance for access to healthcare infrastructure and services in the region. Over the coming years, it is planned to have further regional dialogue on these issues, before submitting additional detailed recommendations to government.

## 10. Additional Highlights

The Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour 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 over the last three years 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 various backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and varying 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, some additional highlights for 2010 – 2011 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 the coming years.

- Regional Council members attended at Provincial Land use Planning Dialogue Session held in St John’s (November 23, 2010). The results of the discussion at this session will be used to inform the Provincial Government’s advice on land-use planning.
- Council also submitted an advice document to the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. This advice related to accessing labour market development

programs and services in the region and the impact of recent changes on local communities and their projects.

- Council members participated in a regional rural research forum, organized by Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland and held at the Bonne Bay Marine Station (November 9 and 10, 2010). The purpose of this forum was to look at increasing rural research in the region, identifying research gaps and opportunities for collaborations between key stakeholders and partners. Council members provided a valuable regional and community voice in these discussions.
- Regional Council members have also been actively involved with a community based research project which seeks to identify and promote synergies between the Fishery – Tourism sectors in the Bonne Bay region. Two council members sit on the steering committee for this project, which recently received MITACs and Rural Secretariat funding. The research for this project has now started and will be completed in September 2011. It is hoped that the results from the research will enable the council to follow-up with additional policy advice relevant to the creation of opportunities in the Fishery and Tourism sectors.

## 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 it faces remain fairly similar from year to year. 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 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 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**

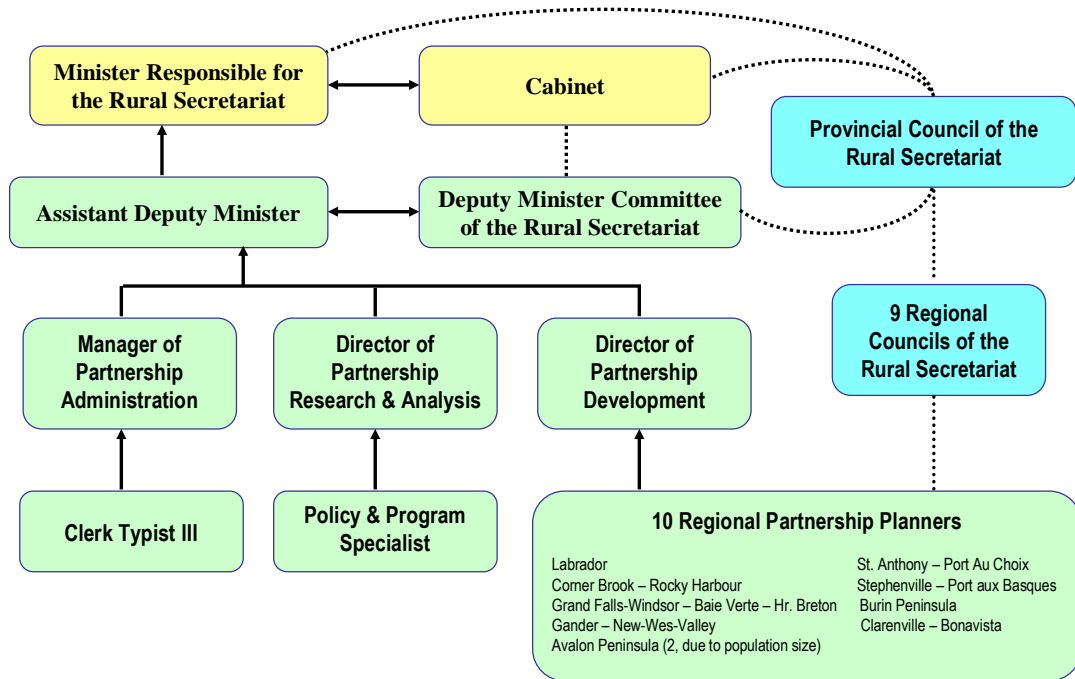
**Outcome Statement:** Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

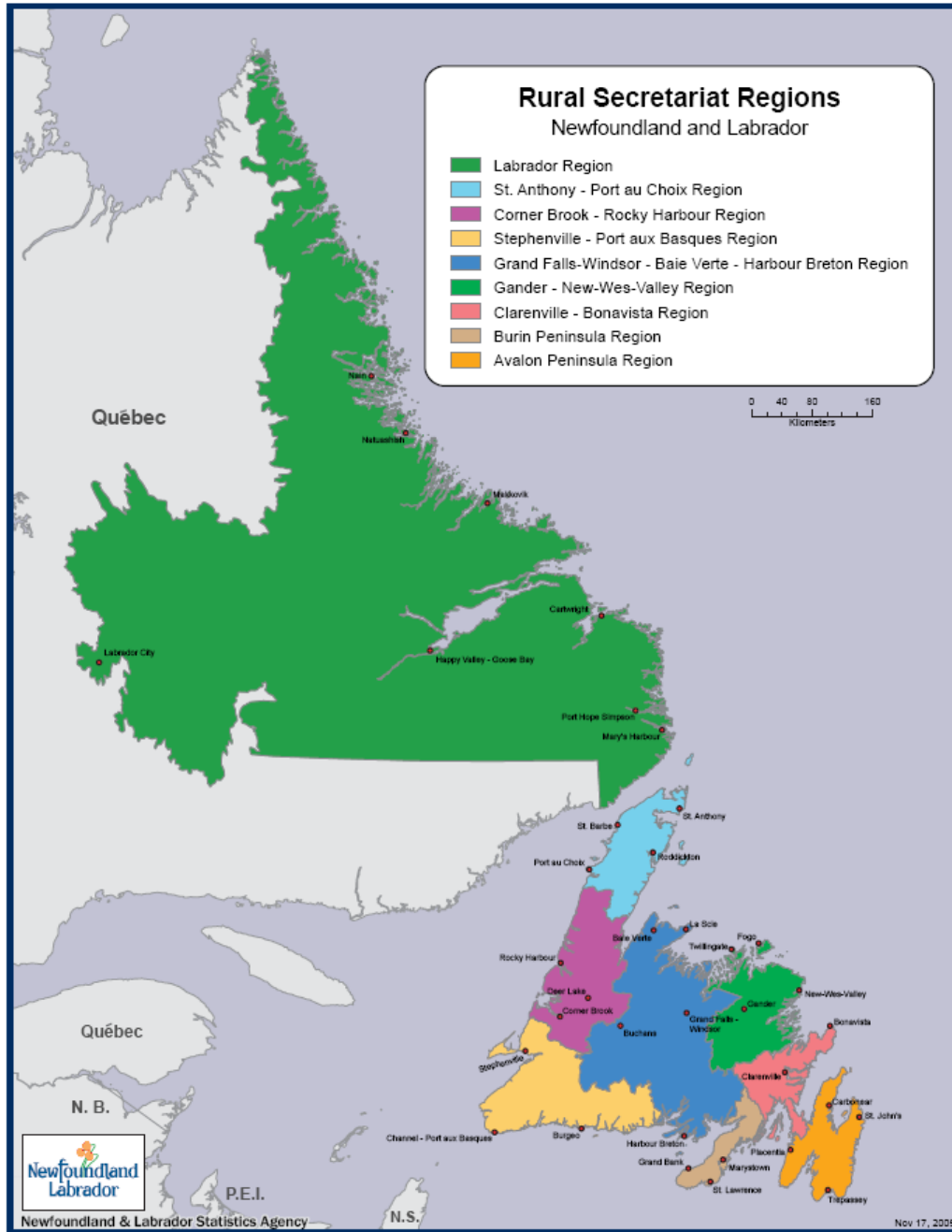
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

# Appendix B: Organizational Structure

## Rural Secretariat Structure



# Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



# Appendix D: Mandate of the Rural Secretariat and Provincial Council

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## **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.

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Photo Courtesy of Rural Secretariat



## Rural Secretariat

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