



Gander—New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council

Annual Activity Report 2011-12



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As chairperson for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, I hereby submit the 2011-12 Annual Activity Report for the timeframe April 1, 2011 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.

With the sustainability of the region at the forefront, the council remains committed to the objective identified in our 2011-14 Activity Plan. With regional stakeholders as the key players and the support of the Rural Secretariat, the council has been engaged in and/or has supported many valuable citizen-based policy advice, collaboration, research, and public dialogue and engagement initiatives. We see great value in this stakeholder interaction and resulting regional/sector capacity development. The council will continue to play a catalytic role in fostering bottom-up processes of community engagement and development with regional stakeholders.

Complementing the existing membership, this year has seen the appointment of five new members to our Regional Council. These new members bring a varied background of experience and knowledge from within the region to the table, as well as a new perspective on the focus and vision of the council as a whole. This in turn will serve to strengthen our collective capacity as a council as we continue to refine our vision to meet the on-going and ever changing needs of the region, while developing upon the long-term vision and goals identified by council for the region. As individuals and the collective council, we remain committed to this process and strategy.

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council has worked diligently to engage the community and its sector representation in a process aimed at enhancing sector capacity, while focusing on a solution-based approach to the issues identified. As a result of our work, the council has submitted a number of advice documents to government. One such policy document, of utmost importance is the socio-economics of the region, focused on the traditional commercial fishery here in our region and the province as a whole. The document highlights the critical issues identified with the industry and also highlights some grassroots, solution-based suggestions to the challenges identified.

The council will continue to identify collaborative opportunities and develop the capacity of various groups to work together to advance the sustainability of our region. For the past couple of years the council has supported the collaborative capacity of our health and education sectors through our involvement with research and the design of the Central Newfoundland Citizen's Engagement model. We are excited to be implementing this model in the upcoming year.

Using community-based research (CBR) as a tool and partnering with regional stakeholders, such as the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development (IBRD), the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (ACOA), the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation (KEDC), and Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), the council was engaged in a research project

that focused on socio-economic development planning. The results of this collaborative research indicate that pertaining to social and economic development, there appears to be a large capacity issue here in the region.

As the council moves forward, we will be reviewing and discussing the region from the context of its economic, social, environmental, and cultural landscapes. We will continue to explore and refine these determinants of the region's health, learning more about each pillar and engaging regional stakeholders and government in this process. The council looks forward to this challenge and the privilege to be part of this government-supported, solution-based approach to regional growth and sustainability for the Gander- New-Wes-Valley Region.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nadine Decker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nadine Decker, Chairperson

Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

The 2011 Census population for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 46,573. This represents a decline of 0.6 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 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was \$21,800. For the province, personal income per capita was \$24,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$14,800 for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region in 2007. For the province it was \$16,400.

The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 71.8 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 for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 24.1 percent. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6 percent. The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 59.5 percent. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3 percent.

The number of individuals in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2010 was 4,275. The 1991 figure was 11,150.

Census 2006 reported 33.3 percent of people 18 to 64 years of age in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province. About 66.7 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 Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region about 8.1 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, 57.5 percent (+/- 5.3 percent) of individuals age 12 and over in Gander - New-Wes-Valley 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

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of eleven members; three female and eight male. Five new members were appointed to the council in December 2011. The council met four times in 2011-12.

Regional Council members	Community
Nadine Decker (Chairperson)	Fogo Island
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Edythe Goodridge	Salvage
Rick Lackey	Twillingate
David Regular	Summerford
James Snow	Lewisporte
Donald J. Winsor	Eastport
Stanley Sparkes	Glovertown
Dermot Chafe	Gander
Arthur Bull	Gander
Hazel Bishop	Gander

** 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 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. The Planner for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region is Tanya Noble. Her office is located in the Municipality of New-Wes-Valley.

The council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat.

3. MANDATE

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley 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 Gander – New-Wes-Valley 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 our organization. The core values embraced by the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council are as follows:

Collaboration:	Each member is committed to building a culture of collaboration within the region
Creativity/innovation:	Each member strives to transcend traditional ideas, rules and patterns, and to work together to create new ideas, relationships and approaches
Inclusion:	Each member acknowledges the differences and respects the views and perspectives of all. Each person will take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their own views
Learning culture:	Each member accepts that we have a lot to learn and relishes the opportunity to learn more
Participation/engagement:	Each member believes citizen/stakeholder/community engagement is essential to the development of good public policy
Teamwork:	Each member provides support to one another and works co-operatively, respect differing views.
Honesty:	Each member is open and honest in their conduct and interaction maintains the highest of integrity at all times
Excellence:	Each member strives for excellence and quality in everything they do
Transparency	Each member is committed to sharing open and objective advice based on sound information and principles
Trust	Each member agrees to be open and supportive when partnering and to follow through on requests and commitments

6. PRIMARY CLIENTS

The primary clients of the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, other Regional Councils, and departments and agencies within the Provincial Government, among others.

The council also engages with officials of departments and agencies of the Provincial Government, as well as individuals, groups and organizations within the region during the course of our investigation and identification of issues and opportunities pertinent to our mandate.

7. VISION

The vision of the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is:

Healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities within a sustainable region.

Through our work, the council continues to identify priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the region.

8. MISSION

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is committed to supporting the mission of the Rural Secretariat by fostering positive relationships between government departments and rural communities. As such, the council has continued to provide an avenue for public engagement, as well as, community-based research projects or learning events on issues of significance.

The mission of the Rural Secretariat is:

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.

9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

In the 2011-14 Activity Plan Council's objective was to provide ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region. In the three years covered by the plan, the council will focus on issues or topics related to the region's sustainability. To ensure we are properly informed and adequately prepared to advise government on these important matters we will make use of a number of tools to assist us. In keeping with the strategic directions of the Provincial Government (Appendix A), these tools include, but are not limited to, research activities, collaboration and citizen engagement.

In maintaining the required flexibility to effectively complete our work, the council will report on the same objective for each year in the 2011-14 planning cycle. The measures and indicators identified below will be used to monitor progress.

9.1 Issue: Provide Advice to Government

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council believes that the fishery is essential to the long-term sustainability and development of rural communities and the region as a whole. It would be an absolute understatement to say that there have been a large number of reports, commissions and examinations of the fishing industry within this province in an attempt to address challenges within the industry. These many studies and examinations have identified many of the critical issues within the industry.

Within the Gander-New-Wes-Valley Region, and surely others throughout the province, the fishing industry and its many economic influences play a large role in the growth, development and continued prosperity of most of the communities within our rural region(s). Also tied to this great economic resource is a deeply rooted sense of identity and culture that is inherent in the social fabric and people of this province. It is obvious that should the fishing industry continue to decline it would undoubtedly lead to the economic and social demise of many of our communities. The economic support of other industry and trade that might remain without the fishing industry would surely not be able to sustain and maintain these communities as they exist today. In order for this region to succeed and thrive in the future it is imperative that positive changes occur within the current fishery.

Objective: By March 31, 2012 council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government on an issue(s) that relates to regional sustainability.

Measure: Provided advice

Indicators	Accomplishments
Issue Identified	During the April 2011 council meeting, members agreed to continue to build upon the issues and concerns in the fishery. Some of the topics or issues identified included: provincial or joint custodial management, regulatory enforcement, marketing strategy, licensing allocation, sustainability of fishing stocks, scientific research, secondary processing, rationalization/regionalization, aquaculture and financing.
Researched issue	There was no new research conducted during this reporting period because research completed in the previous year was sufficient to inform the issue. The council completed considerable research during the three year

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>period prior to this reporting period (<i>additional details pertaining to this research can be found in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council Activity Report</i>). This research is still relevant to examine the fishery issues highlighted. The council reviewed and utilized the research material of past years to agree on the focus and content for the letter and document to submit to government.</p>
Determined advice to submit to Government	<p>Throughout the summer and at the October 2011 regional council meeting, the council drafted, revised and completed a document titled "<i>Regional Sustainability – The Success of Our Fishery is Critical</i>".</p>
Communicated advice to Government	<p>In November 2011, an advice letter and document titled "<i>Regional Sustainability – The Success of Our Fishery is Critical</i>" was submitted to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.</p>

Discussion of Results:

The future of the fishery has been a focus at the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council table since the very first meeting in 2005. Since then, the council has listened to various citizen and stakeholder perspectives on this important topic. We have also reviewed websites and research publications. In March 2010, the council briefly outlined and submitted preliminary list of significant concerns relating to the commercial fishery to the Provincial Government. These concerns were summarized as "Areas of Focus". The focus areas were also reinforced during an engagement session with 30 participants in May 2010. In November 2010, the council responded to the Department of Fishery and Aquaculture Coastal and Ocean Management Strategy and Policy Framework. The council’s advisory letter also addressed the ongoing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the fishing industry restructuring with industry stakeholders.

During the past year, the council agreed to review past research and build upon the fishery concerns or "Areas of Focus" that we identified in 2010. The issues and concerns of the commercial fishery are many. In November 2011, Council completed a document titled "*Regional Sustainability – The Success of Our Fishery is Critical*" that attempts to highlight concerns that need to be addressed to ensure a viable future fishery that can contribute to the sustainability of the Gander - New-Valley Region and to the province as a whole.

What has been articulated is the need for a change in stewardship philosophy that will foster capacity building and a clear, well-defined role for all stakeholders involved in the industry, to maximize the economic and social benefits of this resource for all. We are in an era of increasing demands on our fishery resource and global competitiveness. As we move forward we have to

be conscious of the history and mistrust that exists in this province within the industry. We need to move beyond this. We are also in a period of heightened interest in general well-being as well as community health and sustainability. The choices we make as a society today will determine the future health and sustainability of many of our rural communities.

10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, other highlights and accomplishments are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the council's mandate and Provincial Governments strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat and will serve to inform the work of the council.

- In November 2011, the council submitted an advisory letter and supporting research to the Provincial Government highlighting the socio-economic planning processes in the region. This advisory letter was based on a community-based research project that council participated on in 2010. The project identified the enablers and barriers to implementing socio-economic planning processes, as well as, recommendations for government and community stakeholders. In a time when we are uncertain if communities and organizations have the capacity to do planning well, we are also faced with a new dynamic of communities and organizations trying to collaborate to overcome the demographic and other challenges they are facing. Currently, all levels of government (Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) have supports for planning process that could be strengthened based the findings and recommendations identified within the research.
- At the January 2012 Regional Council Renewal and Orientation meeting the Provincial Government Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL) asked council members to deliberate and provide advice on the topic of a province-wide 911 system. This unit is tasked to prepare citizens, communities, partners and governments to deal with, respond to and recover from fire, emergencies, and disasters. Participants were asked to provide their regional perspectives on the feasibility of expanding basic and/or enhanced 911 services throughout the province.

Further to the advice highlighted above, the council continues to collaborate with stakeholders in Central Newfoundland to design a citizen engagement model that aims to enhance decision making. This collaborative team includes the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, Grand-Falls – Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council, Rural Secretariat, Central Health, Central Nova School District, College of the North Atlantic, private post-secondary, and Memorial University. The purpose of the process is to learn how to engage/involve citizens of the region in influencing decisions regarding matters that affect them. The goal of the group is to implement the model in the upcoming year.

In February 2012, council members attended a learning event that focused on community-based research (CBR). The event included speakers from the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR), Kitchener, Waterloo and provided participants with an overview of CBR fundamentals including the benefits and challenges.

11. 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. We feel that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

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 the Provincial 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

Our mandate commits us 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

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 council is to clearly and effectively communicate our mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position ourselves as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for us, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as we identify regional priorities, provide advice to government and foster's collaboration.

APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic Directions

1. **Title:** Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

Outcome Statement: A sustainable rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

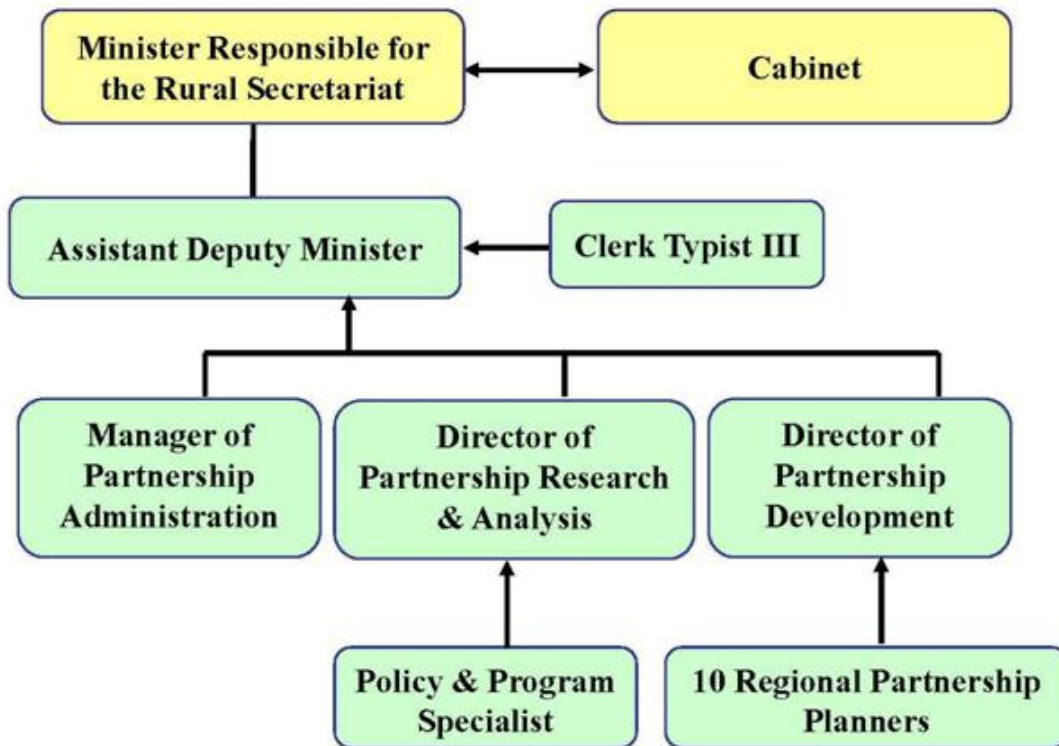
Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Rural Secretariat in the areas of:

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

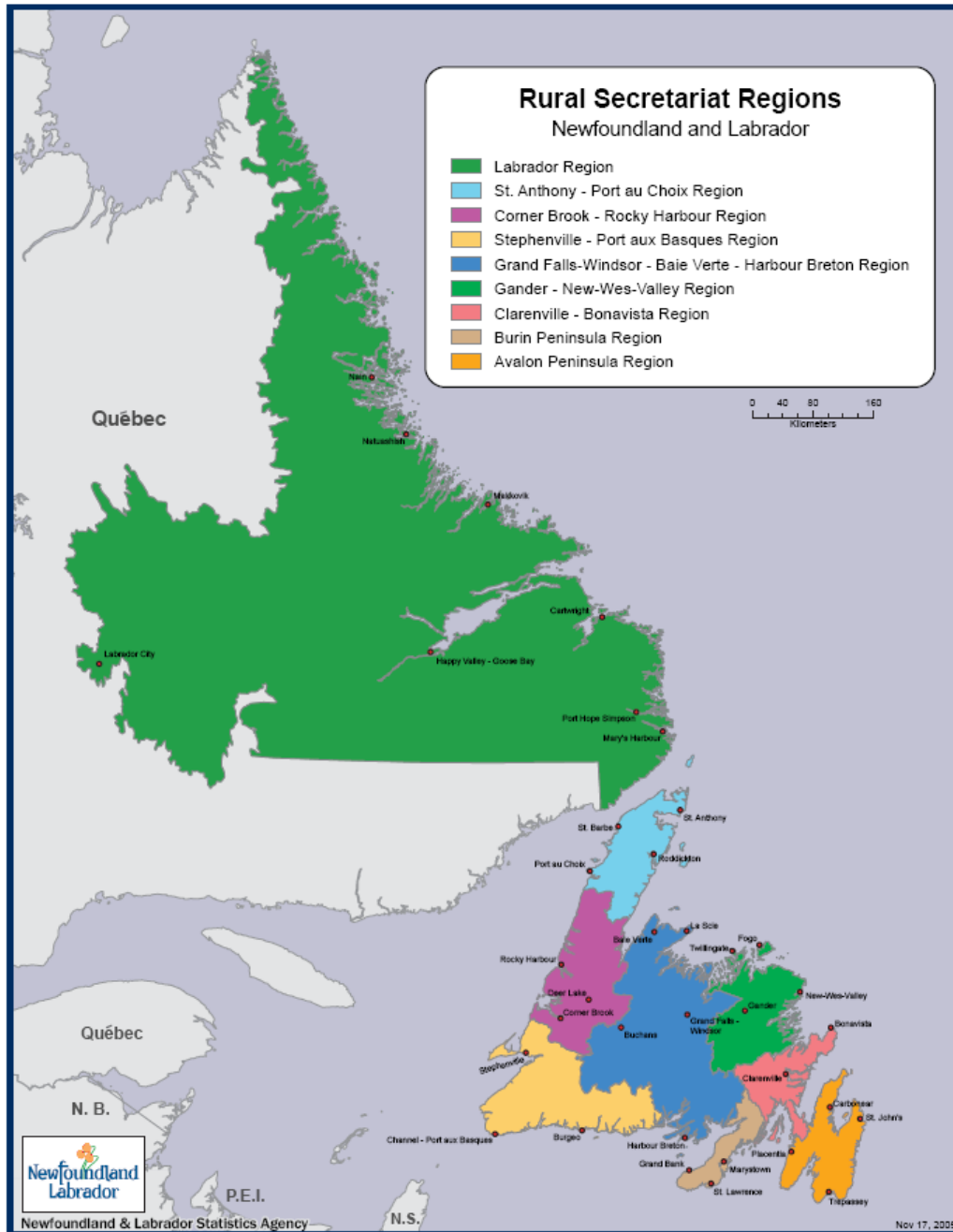
Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is:
	addressed in the council's activity plan
1. Citizen-based policy advice	X
2. Public dialogue and engagement	X
3. Collaboration	X
4. Research	X

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 Maureen Woodrow



Courtesy of Maureen Woodrow



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



Rural Secretariat

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