



Gander – New-Wes-Valley
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2010-11



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, I hereby submit the 2010-11 Annual Activity Report for the timeframe April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011. 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 a clearly defined and well-developed vision for regional sustainability, over the past year the council has made much progress in achieving the goals set out in its 2008-11 Activity Plan; in particular the continuance of our community engagement and capacity building role in creating an enhanced culture of collaboration and cooperation that is conducive to the region's economic and social sustainability and growth. The council has continued to further its commitment to the mandate, vision and mission statement of the Rural Secretariat by embracing and practicing, in its working philosophy and interactions, the core values of collaboration, creativity, empowerment, inclusion, recognition, transparency, and trust. As such, the council has been able to engage in and/or support many valuable citizen-based policy advice, collaboration, research, and public dialogue and engagement initiatives.

The council values the climate of cooperation that has been established through this process, and between the many stakeholder groups and various development sectors/pillars with the region. Again, through continued partnership developments and other effective communication processes and strategies, we will continue our efforts in regional development and sustainability. As such, the council will continue to play a catalytic role in fostering this bottom-up process of community engagement and development with all stakeholders.

We, the members of the Gander- New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat, remain committed to this process of grassroots regional development and are quite pleased with the results thus far. We feel it is through this continued commitment to the ongoing process of community-stakeholder development and capacity building that long-term regional sustainability will be achieved. With earnest anticipation and renewed vigor we look forward to working with the many regional stakeholders that comprise the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region for the common goal of long-term sustainability.

Best Regards,



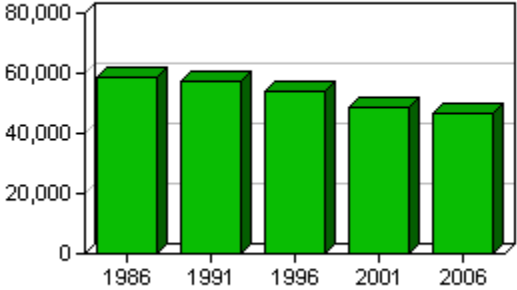
Nadine Decker, Chairperson
Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

Population



The 2006 Census population for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 46,850. This represents a decline of 3.6% 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).

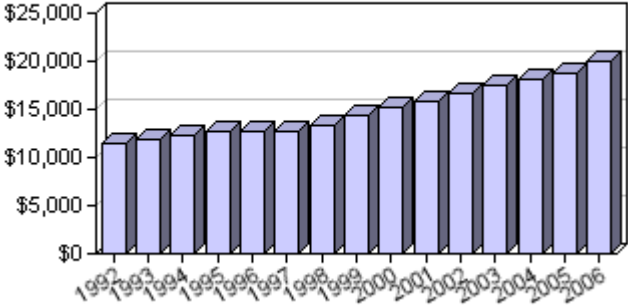
The 2006 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was \$20,000. For the province, personal income per capita was \$22,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for

inflation, was \$13,400 for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

Half of the couple families in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$47,600 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Half of the lone-parent families in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$23,400 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

Personal Income Per Capita



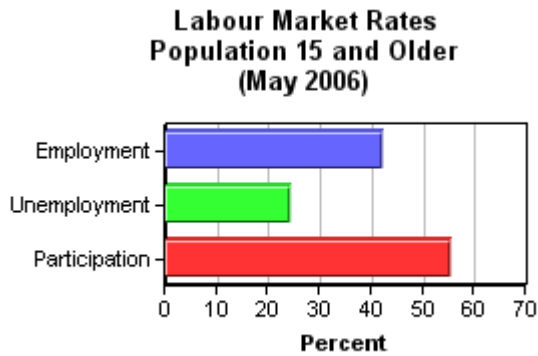
The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 70.9%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2006 was 78.5%.

According to the 2006 Census, in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region 84.5% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

The unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 24.1%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 59.5%. The provincial

employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.



The number of individuals in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 4,060. The 1991 figure was 11,150.

The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 980. The figure for 1991 was 3,925.

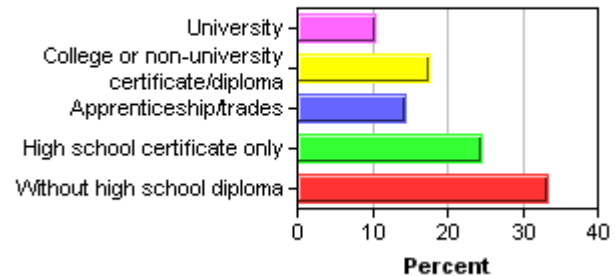
Census 2006 reported 33.3% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat

Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region about 9.0% 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 Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region, 79.1% of people 25 to 34 years of age had at least a high school diploma. This compares to 85.4% in the entire province and 89.1% for Canada.

Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64



A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2005, 66.7% of individuals in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status from very good to excellent. The provincial number in 2005 was 64.5%. In 2005, for Canada, 60.2% of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

2. Regional Council Overview

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of six members; two female and four male. Council met five times in 2010-11. Members also participated in engagement sessions, learning events and sub-committee work.

Regional Council members	Community
Nadine Decker (Chairperson)	Joe Batt's Arm
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Edythe Goodridge	Salvage
Rick Lackey	Twillingate
David Regular	Summerford
James Snow	Lewisporte

** 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, act 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

Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council 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 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 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. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of Council and are as follows:

Collaboration to commit to working together effectively

Creativity to seek and support new ideas and approaches

Empowerment	to assume responsibility for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions
Inclusion	to acknowledge others' views and perspectives and exercise the right and opportunity to express their own
Recognition	to recognize and value the skills that each bring
Transparency	to share open and objective advice based on sound information and principles
Trust	to be open and supportive when partnering and to follow through requests and commitments

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the Provincial Government, among others.

Council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as we carry out our work.

7. Vision

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through our work, the council identifies priorities that contribute to regional sustainability. We consider economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability. Research, engagement, deliberations, and other activities help us support this vision and provide advice to government.

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the long-term objective that council worked towards over the past four years; increased dialogue between government and citizens. The priority focus areas supported the strategic directions of the Provincial Government. Through the thoughtful design and facilitation of regional engagements, the council has provided a forum that

encourages dialogue on the future of the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region and the partnerships required. The results of these engagements have been shared with government and others throughout the region. The indicators and accomplishments discussed below assist both council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

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
<p>A long-term vision of sustainability for the region will have been submitted to the Provincial Government and shared with citizens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2007 Council developed a Vision document which was submitted to the Provincial Government and shared with citizens via mail-out, stakeholder meetings and posted to the Rural Secretariat website. From 2007 to 2009, the council engaged citizens on the priorities and issues identified in this document. Individuals were engaged on two important questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you feel we have identified the key issues for the future sustainability of this region? 2. Are there other topics you feel critical to future sustainability which have not yet been identified? • The results of the council’s past work and engagements have been utilized to develop a new vision/communication document. This document as been submitted to the Provincial Government, shared with citizens and posted on the Rural Secretariat website.
<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"> • Prior to the creation of the councils, limited regional grassroots input had been provided to government from a holistic (social, economic, cultural, environmental), futuristic and sustainable perspective. During the timeframe of this report, the council has engaged citizens and government on topics important to the future sustainability of the region. In addition to thoughtfully designed dialogue sessions that involved government officials, the council has also provided letters and written documents to inform government as they develop policy and make decisions. Examples of advice and engagements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy advice submitted to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture on the future of the fishery – March 2010 ○ Policy advice to the Minister of Health and Community Services in response to the decision to remove the Laboratory and X-ray

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>services from the Town of Lewisporte – October 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members engaged with the Minister Responsible for the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat – July 2009 ○ Policy advice submitted to Minister of Education entitled “Education: An Inherent Right” – March 2009 ○ Policy advice entitled “Municipal Governance” submitted to Minister of Municipal Affairs – March 2009 ○ Response to Department of Human Resources, Labour & Employment regarding the Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy – February 2009 ○ Policy advice to the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat regarding the Labrador Transportation Service and the impact to the Province and Region - December 2008 ○ In 2008, the council partnered with other regional councils and Memorial University’s Harris Centre to host two regional forums. The first was considering rural education delivery and the other was regarding governance. Government officials attended and reports (including attendee’s) were generated from the session and shared with government. ○ May 2009, the council partnered with the Grand Falls – Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council to host the <i>Many Voices, One Vision</i> Forum. This session was designed to build relationships among Regional Councils, health authorities, education stakeholders, government partners and political leaders at the regional level aiding to facilitate a process of cohesive sustainable planning and development for the region.
<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"> ● Departmental officials, Members of the House of Assembly and Ministers have attended and engaged with participants at regional council meetings and other events hosted by the council. Such examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May 2010 the Gander –New-Wes-Valley Regional Council hosted a session with stakeholders in the Fishery. Six panelists, including Mr. Paul Martin, a Director with the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, offered their perspectives from different areas in the fishing industry. This session was designed to support the council as it worked towards priority areas and conclusions to the Provincial Government. A report “The Future of Our Fishery” resulted from the event. ○ September 2009, Mr. Keith Warren, Director of Regional Cooperation Development, Municipal Affairs engaged with members regarding the Municipal Governance advice/discussion document and regional cooperation within

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>the province.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members engaged with the Minister Responsible for the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat – July 2009 ○ May 2009, the council partnered with the Grand Falls – Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council to host the <i>Many Voices, One Vision</i> Forum. This session was designed to build communications and partnering opportunities amongst Regional Councils, health authorities, education stakeholders, government partners and Members of the House of Assembly at the regional level. A report including attendees is available upon request. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Documents submitted and discussed with government and citizens is a mechanism developed to enhance two-way communication. Examples include the <i>Vision</i> Document, Municipal Governance Document, and Education: An Inherent Right.
<p>Community engagement sessions will have been conducted at the regional level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition to creating a vision/communication document, the council engaged citizens on the future of the region and the issues and opportunities highlighted in the vision/communication document. Participants expanded on the issues and opportunities provided and were asked specific questions around infrastructure, tourism, and collaborative initiatives happening in the region. The document was provided to citizens selected by council members, as well as various regional groups such as the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation, municipalities, development associations, Primary Health Care Advisory Committee, etc. ● The document was also distributed via email to individuals in the region who participated in past engagement sessions with the Rural Secretariat. The regional partnership planner circulated the document at regional meetings and forums. Recipients of the document were invited to respond in writing. In addition, approximately five engagement sessions were held throughout the region to gather the comments and views regarding the vision/communication document. ● Council hosted and co-hosted events where citizens could become informed on specific issues/topics and dialogue with one another on important regional matters. Each session was designed so the stakeholder leaders presented their ideas to the council members and other regional participants at the session. A portion of each session involved discussion/dialogue. Reports

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>were generated from each of the examples below and are available upon request. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In May 2010, the Gander –New-Wes-Valley Regional Council held session “The Future of Our Fishery” with stakeholders in the industry. A report resulted from the event and is available upon request. ○ In March 2010, the council co-hosted an engagement session with citizens and stakeholders to discuss and learn more about the social-economic planning processes in the region. ○ In 2008, the council partnered with other regional councils and Memorial University’s Harris Centre to host two regional forums. The first was considering rural education delivery and the other was regarding governance. Government officials attended and reports were generated from the session and shared with participants and government.
<p>Citizens and stakeholders will have been informed about the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The regional partnership planner, on behalf of the council, provided information on the social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of the region through presentations to citizens, organizations and government officials. This information was made available in the vision/communication documents as well as through past activity reports and other documents completed and circulated by the council.

As a catalyst for regional sustainability, we believe we reflect a grassroots voice that encourages more integrated thinking and decision-making for the future. We have identified and discussed complex issues so as to inform and influence the rural policies, programs, research and decision-making of government. Council is committed to examining complex issues from a holistic and long-term perspective. We will continue to bring agencies together, strive to help government departments to develop better rural initiatives and increase trust between citizens and government.

9. Report on Performance

In the 2008-11 Activity Plan Council identified two goals as outlined below. Council recognized that these goals were long-term in nature and that our past activities have supported these directions. The activities and performance of the council with respect to each of the goals is supportive 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 forum to discuss citizens’ perspectives on regional and rural sustainability.

9.1 Issue 1: Advancement of Key Elements for Regional Sustainability

Council has compiled an inventory of issues they feel are critical to long-term regional sustainability. Many of these issues have been highlighted and incorporated in the two vision/discussion documents. Each of these issues requires understanding, evaluation and improvement in order to ensure long-term regional sustainability. In an attempt to focus the learning and work of members, council identified at a minimum one issue to address each year. As a result of this work and in an attempt to improve public policy, an informed perspective outlining why this issue is important to regional sustainability was shared with the Provincial Government.

Goal: By 2011, the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have initiated a process to communicate regional perspectives on the issues and opportunities impacting the region’s sustainability and advised the Provincial Government in the development and implementation of public policy.

Measure: Initiated a process to communicate regional perspectives on issues and opportunities impacting the region’s sustainability to the Provincial Government

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Process established where regional perspectives can inform the development and implementation of public policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council established a process whereby regional challenges and opportunities are identified. From these challenges and opportunities regional priorities are selected. Research and/or engagements are completed and advice is provided to government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In order to advance the understanding of an issue the council collects and reviews reports, data and existing research on the topic (i.e. Canada’s Ocean Strategy) ○ Council sometimes engages citizens on these topics. Various engagement styles/methods have been used: one-on-one conversations, group discussions, learning events/forums, etc. (i.e. May 2010 regional forum on the future of the fishery) ○ Departmental staff and Members of the House of Assembly have been invited to council meetings and other regional meetings hosted by the council. • Two communication/vision documents have been produced and shared with government, citizens and posted on the Rural Secretariat website. • Regional advice on a variety of topics has been submitted to the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat, the Rural Secretariat Provincial Council as well as other Ministers. (see section 8)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based research (CBR) involves research conducted by community groups often in collaboration with universities and other research institutions. For example, in the summer of 2009 to March 2010, the council partnered with the Rural Secretariat, Memorial University's Department of Geography, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency on a community-based research project entitled "Beyond the Document: Economic and Socio-economic Planning Processes"
<p>Increased communications with the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, Provincial Government departments and agencies on identified issues or opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to 2008, the council had limited communications with the Provincial Council, Provincial Government departments and other agencies. Much of our efforts focused on learning about the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of the region and creating a vision/communication document. However, since 2008, the council has hosted, engaged in and/or supported many collaborative learning events, research, and public engagement initiatives to support council's advice to government. These activities have increased communication with various stakeholders. Council elected a Provincial Council Representative and an alternate to attend Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat Council Meetings. Advice documents to government are copied to the Provincial Council. Other advice is provided directly to the Provincial Council. Two communication/vision documents have been shared with government, citizens and posted on the Rural Secretariat website. Council hosted regional meetings on various topics and extended invitations to regional stakeholders to attend. Reports (including attendees) resulted from these sessions and have been submitted to government and shared with stakeholders. (i.e. Future of the Fishery, Socio-Economic Planning Processes research document)
<p>Confirmation received that informed regional perspectives have been agreed upon by council members and communicated to the Provincial Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed regional perspectives have been agreed upon by council members. These perspectives have been communicated to the Provincial Government. Council has met with departmental staff and/or received a written correspondence for each of the advice pieces submitted.

2010-11 Objective: By March 31, 2011, Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have provided input and advice to the Provincial Government on additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability.

Measure: Provided input and advice to the Provincial Government on additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
<p>Information (Research, data, presentation, etc.) collected and reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance understanding on the issue of marine resources, particularly the fishery, council hosted or participated in the following events and considered the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May 2010 the Gander –New-Wes-Valley Regional Council held session with stakeholders in the industry. This session was designed to support Council as we worked towards priority areas and conclusions to the Provincial Government. Six panelists gave their perspectives from different areas in the fishing industry. The panelists were: Dr. Maureen Woodrow, (Ocean Management Research Network), Mr. John Collins (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), Mr. Paul Martin (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture), Mr. David Decker (Fish, Food and Allied Workers), Ms. Heather Starkes (NL Independent Fish Harvesters Association), Mr. Scott Simms (M.P, Bonavista – Gander – Grand Falls – Windsor). A report “The Future of Our Fishery” resulted from the event. This report highlights the perspectives of the panelists and the discussion results. ○ Council members attended and collected information at the Placentia Bay Large Ocean Management Area – Strategic Planning Session – November, 22&23, 2010. The session examined the social, economic, cultural and safety related priorities for the Large Ocean Management Area (LOMA) Highlights from this session were shared with Council during their December 2010 meeting. ○ Two policy briefs by Dr. Maureen Woodrow: Rationalization of the Fishing Industry and Seafood Prices and Market Access for Change

	<p>Islands Inshore Fishers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coastal and Ocean Management Strategy and Policy Framework for Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2010
Council deliberated and/or engaged citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During the afternoon of the May 2010 session highlighted in the section above, approximately 30 stakeholders explored options and advice that would ensure the future sustainability of the fishing industry. Participants were asked to deliberate on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What advice would you give to the Government(s) to ensure the future sustainability of the fishery? ○ What needs to happen to ensure the future sustainability of the fishery? Who needs to do what? ● A report titled “The Future of Our Fishery” was generated from this session and is available upon request.
Advice submitted to the Provincial Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In November 2010, an advice letter was submitted to government. This letter addressed the Provincial Government’s ongoing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the fishing industry restructuring with industry stakeholders. The letter also responded to the Coastal and Ocean Management Strategy and Policy Framework. A report titled “The Future of Our Fishery” resulting from the May 2010 session was also forwarded to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Prior to the 2009-10 reporting period, the council discussed and reviewed the inventory of issues related to regional sustainability and through a voting process identified marine resources, particularly the fishery, as the topic they would explore. During the 2009-10 reporting period, the council engaged citizens and in March 2010 submitted a document highlighting concerns about the fishery to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The council decided that due to the complexity of the issues associated with the fishery and the importance of the fishery to this region’s sustainability, council would continue to build upon this work in 2010-11. In May 2010, with the support of the regional partnership planner, the council hosted a regional forum that focused on the future of the fishery. In 2010, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture released a *Coastal and Ocean Management Strategy and Policy Framework for Newfoundland and Labrador* for review. The council responded to this document and provided advice with respect to the Fisheries MOU

process. In the upcoming year, the council may provide additional advice on other issues that have been identified within the fishery. Council will continue to identify and work on issues that impact the future sustainability of this region and the province.

9.2 Issue 2: The Process of Community Engagement

The council utilizes the vision, as well as other means (discussion documents, research, presentations, forums, etc.) to engage citizens and government on topics related to regional sustainability. The vision has been shared with citizens who have then been invited to provide feedback to council. Highlighting and communicating issues and opportunities related to regional sustainability has laid a foundation for regional partners and government departments to work together to advance these priorities.

Goal: By March 31, 2011 the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have expanded its communication (engagement) process and refined its long-term vision for sustainable development of the region.

Measure: Community engagement process expanded and vision refined to reflect what council has learned.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Process established to engage citizens in the identification of regional priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council developed a vision/communication document and solicited feedback to ensure the opportunities and challenges identified were supported throughout the region and to identify any additional issues (i.e. Tourism, Infrastructure). Council held sessions and distributed a questionnaire. • During 2008-11, the Regional Partnership Planner, on behalf of the council, presented on eight occasions the regional challenges and opportunities highlighted by council. Examples of communities and organizations that received presentations included; Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation, Town of Eastport, Town of Gander, Town of Twillingate, and Family Resource Centers. • Council engaged citizens on the issues and opportunities identified in the 2007 vision document. A questionnaire was developed and used during the vision engagements. Council members, as well as, the regional partnership planner hosted engagement sessions and/or circulated a questionnaire. From 2008-11, three engagements totalling 24 participants were held and 15 responses to the questionnaire were received. There was great support for the vision document. Most individuals voiced their support and

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>emphasized or expanded on a section within the document. New things that were identified and additional comments that supported existing sections were compiled and reviewed.</p>
<p>Increased citizen engagement in the vision process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to 2007-08, council did not engage citizens specifically on the vision/communication document. • During 2008-09, the council identified and engaged individuals and groups through various methods (website, email, engagement sessions, regional sessions/events, mail-outs, etc.) All recipients of the document were invited to provide feedback by either writing or meeting with a council member or the regional partnership planner. The feedback from the sessions was collected and recorded. The views collected at these sessions both supported and informed the priorities of the council and were utilized to refine the 2009-10 vision/communication document.
<p>Increased dialogue on the future of the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to 2008, much of the council’s efforts focused on learning about the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of the region and creating the vision/communication document. Since 2008, we have circulated the communication/vision document and posted it on the Rural Secretariat website. This document was an overview of council’s early deliberations. Its purpose was to stimulate discussion on the future sustainability of the region and identify regional priorities. Citizens were engaged utilizing the document and a revised document based on the input of regional citizens was created. Over the past year the updated document has been posted on the Rural Secretariat website and being distributed by the regional partnership planner. • In addition, we have also hosted and designed several events in the region. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2008, the council partnered with other regional councils and Memorial University’s Harris Centre to host two forums. The first was considering rural education delivery and the other was regarding governance. ○ In May 2009, the council partnered with the Grand

Indicators	Accomplishments
	<p>Falls – Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council to host the <i>Many Voices, One Vision</i> Forum. This session was designed to build relationships amongst Regional Councils, health authorities, education stakeholders, government partners and political leaders at the regional level aiding to facilitate a process of cohesive sustainable planning and development for the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May 2010, the council hosted a region session on the future of the fishery. ● The regional partnership planner presented and engaged individuals at a number of regional events/meetings. The focus of these sessions included the mandate of council, highlighted regional demographics, as well as regional opportunities and challenges (social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects). ● Many of the sessions allowed time for discussion that focused on the future of the region. The regional partnership planner can be contacted for presentations.
Long-term regional vision refined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revised Vision/Communication document available for circulation (March 2010), shared with government (March 2011) and posted on the Rural Secretariat website (February 2011).

2010-11 Objective: By March 31, 2011 Gander- New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have communicated a long-term vision document for regional sustainability.

Measure: Communicated a long-term vision document for regional sustainability.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
Revised vision circulated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2010-11 the Vision/Communication document was made available in electronic and printed (pamphlet) form. The document has been circulated via email to Municipalities within the region to share with citizens. It can be viewed on the Rural Secretariat website. Additionally, the document is available upon request.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2010-11
Revised vision submitted to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter and Vision/Communication Document submitted to Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat March 2011.
Revised vision posted on the Rural Secretariat website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council Vision/Communication document posted (February 2011) on the Rural Secretariat website. www.gov.nl.ca/rural

By hosting sessions (forums, one-on-one, etc.) that focus on the future sustainability of the Gander – New-Wes-Valley region, giving presentations and circulating the vision/communication documents, as well as other documents, the council believes that it has created an awareness of its work and opened itself to the community for consultation and discussion. The council intends to continue engaging citizens on opportunities and challenges that impact this region’s long-term sustainability. We hope to position ourselves as an objective, informed and influential advisory body.

10. Additional Highlights

The work of the council is a long-term process that requires collaboration and capacity building with citizens and stakeholders within the region and throughout the province, as we all have a responsibility in ensuring regional sustainability. Past work has allowed us to play a catalytic role in bringing agencies and people together and we will continue our community engagement and capacity-building role in the years ahead and strive towards creating an enhanced culture of collaboration and cooperation that is conducive to economic and social sustainability and growth. We feel that our performance in past years has allowed us to make advancements in this process.

Council is committed to providing credible advice to government. We encourage and work with our regional partners to mobilize community-based or small regional level, data gathering research initiatives that give the stakeholders involved the information and knowledge to effectively advise government on regional and rural issues. The council has partnered with other regional agencies to complete two such community-based research projects. These research endeavours have helped us shed light on the realities facing our rural communities.

- In an attempt to determine whether or not strategic planning is a worthwhile investment, Council partnered (Summer 2009 to March 2010) with the Rural Secretariat, Memorial University - Department of Geography, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency on a community-based research (CBR) project entitled “Beyond the Document: Economic and Socio-economic Planning Processes”. Researchers completed a comparative analysis of seven case studies, identifying enablers and barriers to plan implementation. Recommendations were provided to government and community stakeholders in consultation with the project steering committee. An outcome of the research findings was the design and administration of a survey to test the

recommendations with Economic Development Boards and Rural Secretariat Regional Councils throughout the province. This work was completed during Spring/Summer 2010. A research report and survey report have been compiled. Results of the research and survey were shared and discussed with stakeholders during the fall of 2010.

- In 2009-10 Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council and Grand-Falls – Windsor Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council initiated two sessions with government health and education officials in the regions. These sessions highlighted the changing demographics and population shifts throughout the regions and the resulting service delivery issues being faced today. Participants identified the need for change and adjustments in service delivery throughout the two Rural Secretariat regions. A working group was formed and participants agreed to work together to try and understand and solve these complex problems. Partners of this collaborative team include the two Regional Councils, Rural Secretariat, Central Health, Central Nova School District, College of the North Atlantic, private post-secondary institutions, and Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Medicine. In 2010, the team agreed to design and initiate a process that aims to define the issues of future service delivery throughout the regions and engage individuals in a common understanding of these issues. A first step in this process was to review literature related to effective citizen engagement for the purposes of enhancing decision making related to resource allocation. This review was completed by a researcher from January 2011 to March 2011. This research was shared and discussed with the committee in March 2011.
- In December 2010 and January 2011, the council partnered with the Central West Regional Council to build upon a survey that was initiated by the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council. Similar to some past work of the council, the Clarenville - Bonavista Rural Regional Council has been working on a policy document about community schools for government. To help with this process, the Gander - New-Wes-Valley and Central West Regional Councils circulated a survey to the Central Nova School District to determine the extent to which schools in the district are currently functioning as a community schools. A survey report has been compiled.

In addition to the research highlighted above, other activities have been summarized below. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the future work of the council. These activities include:

- Council provided feedback to the Provincial Council with respect to Food Security Document and Presentation – February 2011
- November 2010, Regional Council members participated in a provincial land use planning session hosted by the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat. This session involved all Regional Councils as well as other stakeholders throughout the province. This citizen engagement event combined technology (Turning Point Technologies, an audience response polling technology) with lively interactive discussions that focused on future land use in the province.
- Council was invited to present at the FFAW Twillingate & Area Fisheries Symposium (April 2010) and the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation Partners Meeting (November 2010). Both presentations provided an opportunity to highlight the work of the council. The presentations focused on the mandate of the council, some regional demographics, as well as regional opportunities and challenges.

- A council member attended the “Advancing Decision Making in a Changing Climate” Conference March 23 -24, in St. John’s, NL. The Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions Association (ACASA) hosted a two-day conference to advance decision making around climate change adaptation.

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 it faces remain fairly similar from year to year. It feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of policy advice to government

The council’s mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

The council’s mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and be a conduit for advice to government to advance efforts.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for it is to 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

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one Government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The Transparency and Accountability Act requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across Government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

The directions related to the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

1. Title: Regional Partnership Development

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

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

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

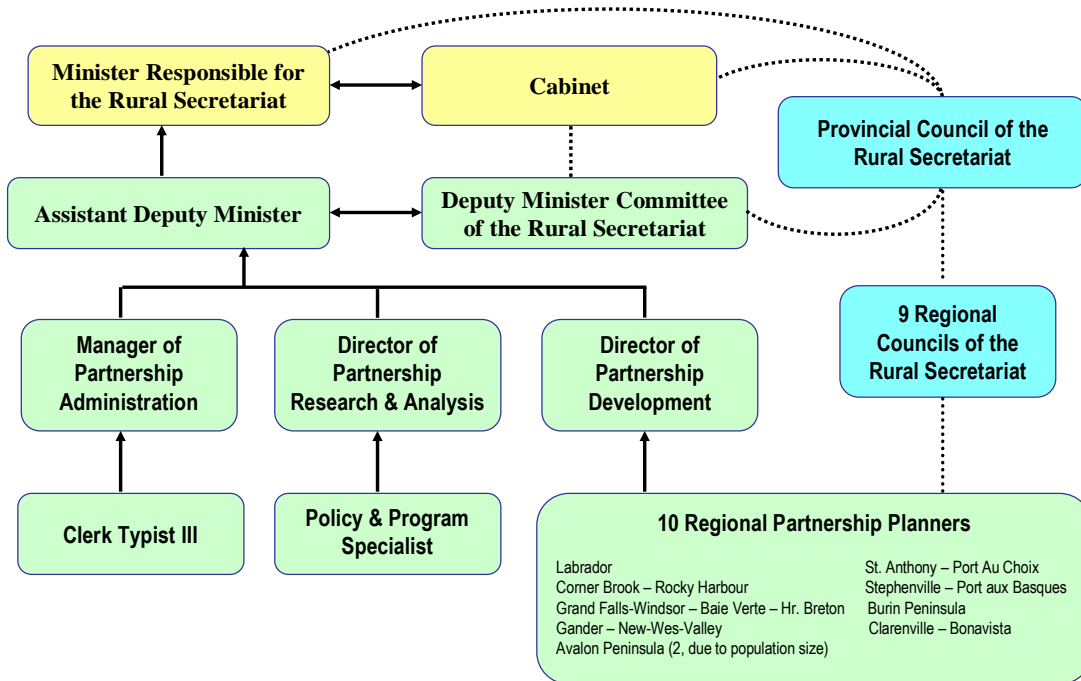
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

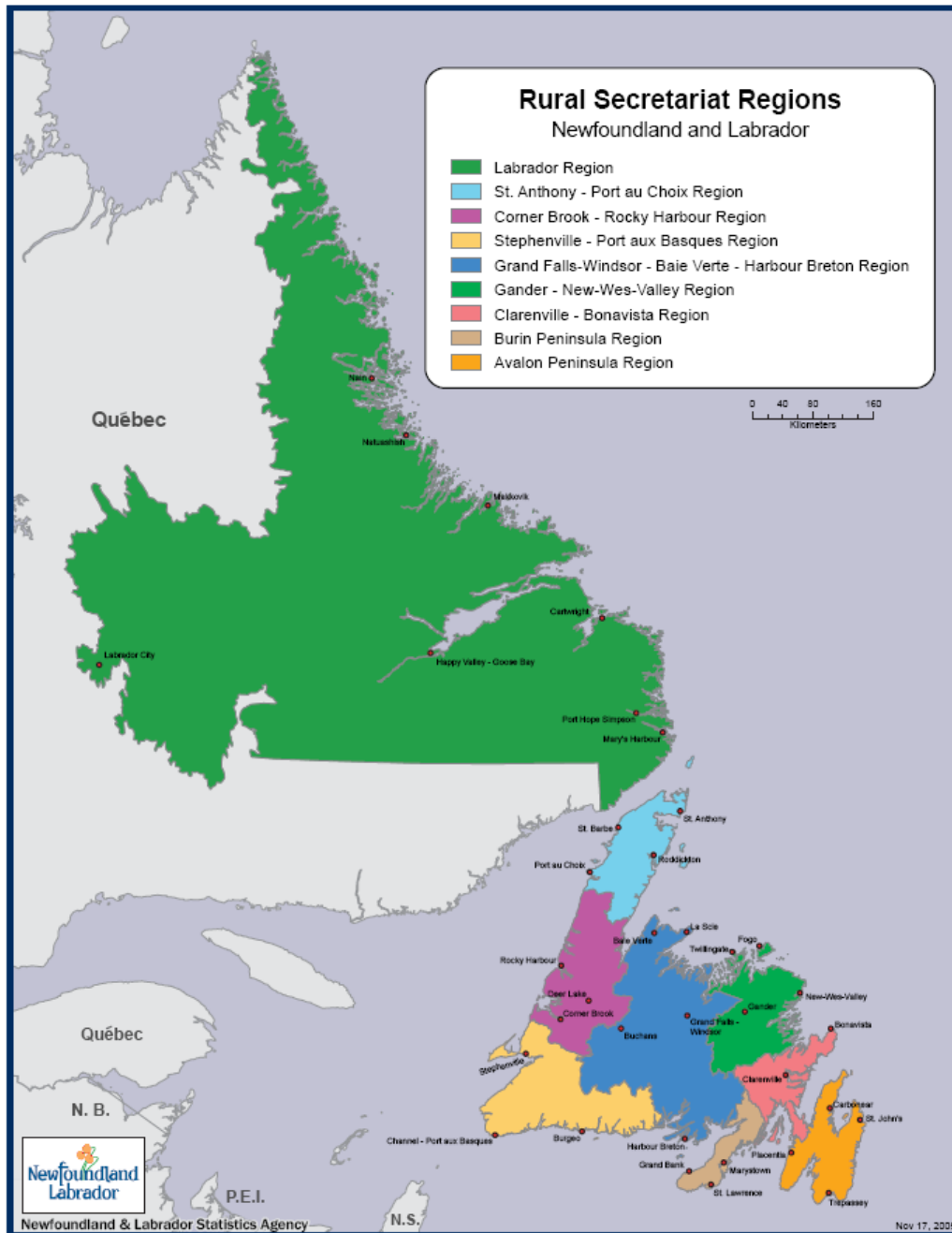
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and 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 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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