



# Labrador Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council

**Annual Activity Report 2011-12**



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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As chairpersons for the Labrador Regional Council, we hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2011-2012 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, please accept our signatures as indicative of the council's accountability for our achievements reported here.

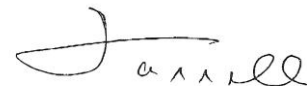
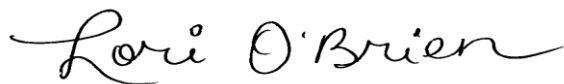
The last year provided the opportunity for council to move away from previous commitments and begin to look at other issues in the region. The health related research has been completed; however, the council is waiting for a final report. When the final report is submitted, this on-going project will be completed. There were many learning opportunities that came out of this partnership process.

Council has learned that partnering on a research project takes time and commitment but is a worthwhile endeavour and looks forward to doing more research in the future. Research and community engagement is a positive way to establish priorities for the region. The council believes partnering with community and government groups is a resourceful way to provide support and advice.

In December 2011, four new members were appointed to the Labrador Regional Council. These members enhance the council and provide support and input to the advice council is able to provide. The appointments illustrate a commitment to council and an appreciation for the work they do.

Through dialogue and partnerships we hope to provide advice to government in a relevant and timely manner. The council continues to support the advancement of sustainability in the region and Labrador Regional Council's mandate to be informed on the challenges and progressive in advancing communities to overcome them.

Sincerely,



and

Lori O'Brien and Jim Farrell  
Co-Chairs  
Labrador Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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# 1. OVERVIEW OF THE REGION

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The 2011 Census population for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 26,728. This represents an increase of 1.3 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 Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was \$29,100. For the province, personal income per capita was \$24,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$18,700 for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region in 2007. For the province it was \$16,400.

The 2007 self-reliance ratio for Labrador Rural Secretariat Region was 88.1 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 18.5 percent. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6 percent. The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 76.9 percent. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3 percent.

The number of individuals in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2010 was 1,885. The 1991 figure was 4,695.

Census 2006 reported 26.0 percent of people 18 to 64 years of age in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1 percent of people in the entire province. About 74.0 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 Labrador Rural Secretariat Region about 9.9 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, 63.4 percent (+/- 4.9 percent) of individuals age 12 and over in Labrador Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status as excellent or very good. 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](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 Labrador Regional Council is comprised of 11 members; five female and six male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including four members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The Labrador Regional Council met four times in 2011-12.

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

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional 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 Labrador region is Lisa Densmore. Her office is located in the office of the Department of Innovation, Business and Rural Development at Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

<b>Regional Council members</b>	<b>Community</b>
Carol Burden	Port Hope Simpson
Cora Edmunds	Postville
Eric Flynn	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Hedley Ryland	L'Anse au Loup
Jim Farrell	Wabush
Jonathan Jesseau	Labrador City
Leander Baikie	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Lori O'Brien	L'Anse au Loup
Patsy Ralph	Labrador City
Molly Shiwak	Nain
Robin Cooper	Happy Valley-Goose Bay

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

## 3. MANDATE

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The Labrador 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 Labrador 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 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 Rural Secretariat 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>Inclusion:</b>	We acknowledge difference and cherish the views and perspectives of all. We take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their 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 and quality in everything we do

## 6. PRIMARY CLIENTS

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The primary clients of the Labrador 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 Labrador Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

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

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

## 8. MISSION

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The Labrador Regional Council supports the mission of the Rural Secretariat:

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

The Labrador Regional Council supports the mission of the Rural Secretariat by collaborating on issues that impact the region and support sustainability. Through dialogue, presentations and experts, council members and stakeholders learn from each other and work together to identify and prioritize issues and topics on which to develop policy and decision making advice.

The council supports partners in their use of innovative public engagement, collaboration and/or research methods/approaches to draft policy advice documents; identify the appropriate recipients for such advice; and follow up on advice submitted to ensure timely and appropriate responses.

## 9. REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

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In the 2011-2014 Activity Plan, council identified one objective; provide ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region. This objective considers the council's mandate and financial resources as well as the Provincial Government's strategic directions (Appendix A). The identified measures and indicators are used to monitor progress. The council will report on the same objective for each year in the 2011-14 planning cycle.

### 9.1 Issue: Provide Advice to Government

The Labrador Regional Council believes that it is crucial to long-term sustainability that providing advice to the Provincial Government be reflective of and in accordance with the issues in Labrador such as the challenge of large -scale development. The well-being of communities will be impacted by large-scale industrial developments and how they impact the limits of infrastructure and services in the region. To assist in the work towards regional sustainability,



the council partnered with researchers, organizations and the Provincial Government to support their learning and enable them to provide well-informed advice that is carefully considered.

**2011-12 Objectives:** By March 31, 2012, the council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government on issues that relate to regional sustainability.

**Measure:** Provided advice

Indicators	Accomplishments
Issue Identified	<p>The Labrador Regional Council recognizes that the development of resources is a very important factor in the sustainability of Labrador. With the present (and future) large-scale industrial developments in Labrador, the council felt that there could potentially be great impacts on communities and families living in the region. This issue was identified in 2011 and a partnership was subsequently formed with Memorial University and researcher Michelle Porter, PhD Candidate.</p>
Researched issue	<p>The research project, <i>“Assessing current understandings of the impacts of large-scale industrial development in Labrador West and Isthmus regions and identification of future research needs and potential mitigation strategies”</i>, was conducted by Michelle Porter and focused on how five communities in the Isthmus can maximize benefits and minimize the costs of industrial activity in the region. Representatives from the provincial Rural Secretariat identified Labrador West and the Isthmus region as key study areas.</p> <p>Some preliminary findings of the study were presented at the Combined Councils of Labrador Annual General Meeting (February 2012). Some council members were in attendance. This event also provided the researcher with an opportunity to collect additional data.</p> <p>A report entitled, <i>The Analysis of Municipal Readiness for Socio-Economic Development Opportunities in the Communities Located on the Isthmus of Avalon Region</i>, was completed in March 2012.</p>

Indicators	Accomplishments
Consensus developed on advice to Government	<p>The Labrador Regional Council received the above noted report in March 2012. The research clearly indicated that there was much more work to be done in understanding the impact of the future development and the social outcomes. There was not enough time for the council to explore the suggested directions of the research paper.</p> <p>Through council discussion it was decided that more research was needed in the areas identified by the literature review and the community consultation in Happy Valley-Goose Bay conducted during the Combined Councils of Labrador Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>The council has agreed to delve deeper into this issue before submitting advice to government. The council feels the research paper can be brought back to the community and used to guide further research into impacts of industrial development.</p>
Communicated advice to Government	As noted above, the Labrador Regional Council did not submit advice in 2011-12. The council did not feel the research could be submitted at this time and more work is required as directed by the paper.

**Discussion of Results:**

The report, *The Analysis of Municipal Readiness for Socio-Economic Development Opportunities in the Communities Located on the Isthmus of Avalon Region*, is intended to be an exploration of potential research opportunities as identified by community members and leaders who were participants at either of two deliberative dialogue sessions hosted by the Rural Secretariat. The 2011-2012 objective of providing advice was not achieved because the council requires more time to work on the issue of large-scale development. Large-scale development and its impacts have far reaching social outcomes that need to be explored further.

This report suggests priorities for future research which may occur in phase two. The report was completed in March 2012 and is available through the Rural Secretariat. Some of the outcomes included a literature scan exploring the social impacts of large scale development in similar circumstances. There were four identified impacts from the literature scan:

- 1) Impacts are responsive to local contexts.
- 2) Residents’ experiences of impacts are relevant.

- 3) Collaborative partnerships can offset negative impacts.
- 4) There is not enough knowledge about Canadian resource towns.

The Labrador Regional Council agrees that more work is required on this issue and the direction given in the final report will guide future work on the impacts of large scale development. The council is pleased with the work it completed in 2011-12.

## 10. ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

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In addition to the points raised in Section 9, an additional highlight and accomplishment is worthy of mention. These are consistent with the council's mandate and Provincial Government's strategic directions, and will serve to inform the work of the council.

In January 2012, newly appointed and existing council members attended Regional Council Renewal 2012, an orientation for all regional councils throughout the province. At this event, the councils took part in an engagement session led by Fire and Emergency Services – Newfoundland and Labrador (FES-NL) around the Provincial 911 System. A representative from FES-NL provided the regional councils with a presentation and a background document to inform the discussion. The Labrador Regional Council was able to enhance the dialogue by providing a remote lens to the 911 discussion.

The councils gave their feedback on how emergency systems currently work in their communities, the importance of civic addresses and the challenges unincorporated areas face in making changes to civic addressing. The last issue discussed was funding a province-wide 911 service, how that would look and how communities could potentially be impacted. Council agreed and were pleased to participate in providing the advice to FES-NL.

The information was compiled using Turning Point Technology and Google Docs to create a succinct package of data in real time to FES-NL who were studying the feasibility of a basic or enhanced province wide 911 service. The information gathered was then submitted to FES-NL to help inform decisions on implementing a province wide 911 system.

The Labrador Council feels safety is very important in the remote region of Labrador. They were particularly interested in how a province-wide system would enhance the level of response they currently have given their remote locations. The council felt this type of process was very positive and looks forward to working on new issues in 2012-13.

# 11. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

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As the nature of the work of the council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. It feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

## **Provision of Policy Advice to government**

The council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to 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**

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 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 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

### 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:

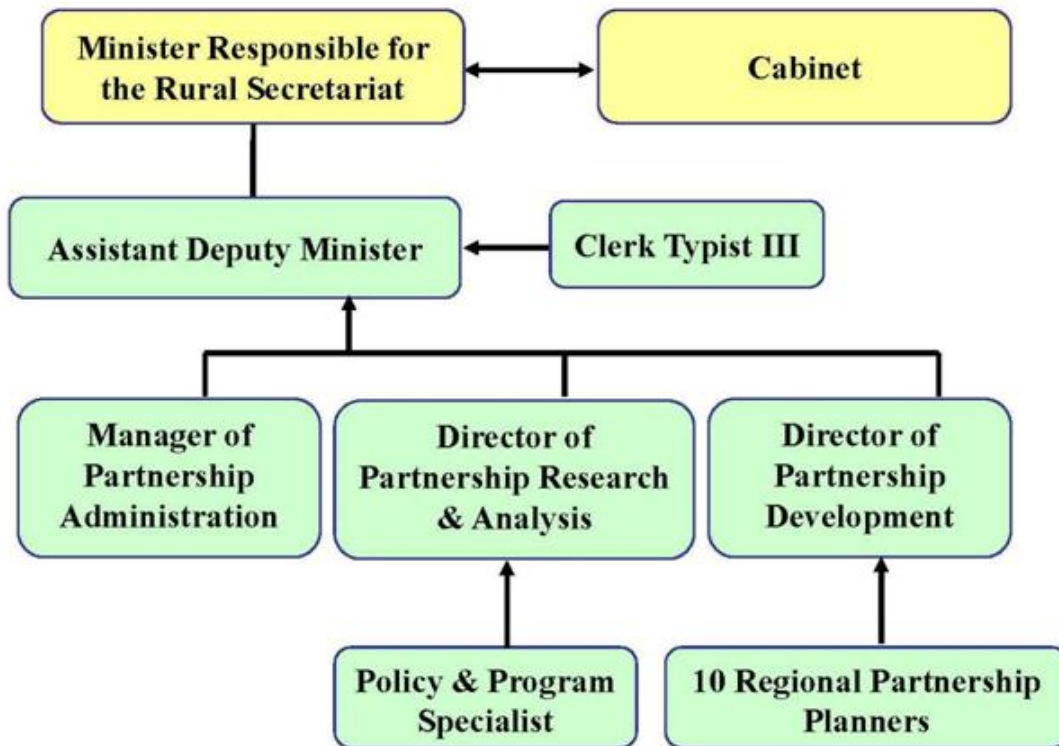
- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

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	
3. Collaboration	x
4. Research	x

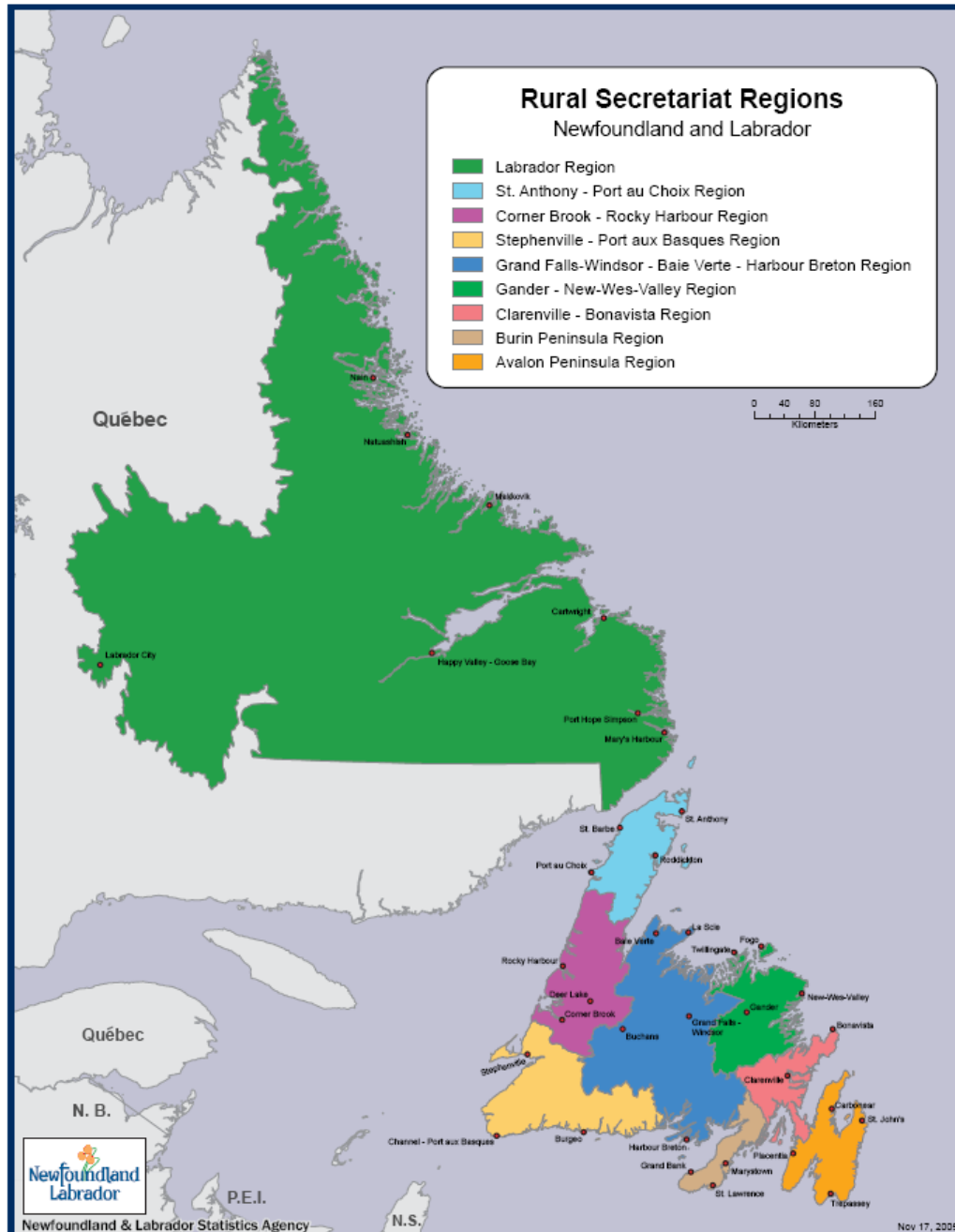
# APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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## Rural Secretariat Organizational Chart



# APPENDIX C: MAP OF RURAL SECRETARIAT REGIONS



# APPENDIX D: MANDATES OF 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 effect Provincial and Regional sustainability.



## PHOTO CREDITS:



Courtesy of Rural Secretariat



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



Courtesy of the Rural Secretariat



## Rural Secretariat

**Lisa Densmore**

Regional Partnership Planner  
C/o Innovation Trade & Rural Development  
P.O. Box 3014, Stn. B  
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL A0P 1E0  
Phone: (709) 896-7979  
Fax: (709) 896-0234  
Email: [lisadensmore@gov.nl.ca](mailto:lisadensmore@gov.nl.ca)