

St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority

Annual Performance Report 2020-21





Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority

Chairperson's Message

The Honourable Derrick Bragg
Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Petten Building
30 Strawberry Marsh Road
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Bragg:

In accordance with the provisions of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for category 3 public bodies, I am pleased to submit the Annual Performance Report for the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority for the period of April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

The St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority was successful in fulfilling its objective for the reporting period. The Authority was also successful in supporting government's commitment to enhanced utilization, sustainability and public awareness of the forestry, agriculture and agrifoods sector.

My signature below is on behalf of the Authority and indicative of the Authority's accountability for the results reported on its objective for 2020-21.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeremy Short".

Jeremy Short
Chairperson

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Overview

Section 3 of the **St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area Regulations** under the **Lands Act** provides for the appointment of a St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority (the Authority). The Authority is appointed by the Minister of the Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) and must have at least five people, including a Chairperson and a Secretary. During the reporting period, the Authority was made up of members from FFA, as well as members from other resource departments as per the regulations.

As of March 31, 2021, the membership of the Authority consisted of the following members:

Name	Position	Department
Jeremy Short	Chair	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Megan Nichols	Secretary	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
John Del Rizzo	Member	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Teri Smith	Member	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Karen Tucker	Member	Digital Government and Service NL
Kimberly Blanchard	Member	Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities

All members are employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and receive no additional remuneration for their involvement with the Authority. There is no budget allocation specific to the duties of the Authority.

The Authority received extensive operational support from FFA. Employees of the Department performed day-to-day administrative functions and consulted other staff regarding applications where necessary. Budgetary support for operations was provided through the Department as well.

Contact Information:

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Land Management Officer
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Mandate:

The St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority has a mandate to:

- a) Review applications to carry out development on land within the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area;
- b) Inform municipalities of decisions made;

- c) Monitor activities within the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area; and
- d) Ensure awareness of the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area and associated regulations.

For more detail on the regulations, please refer to the House of Assembly website at: <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc961079.htm>.

The Authority has not identified separate lines of business, as this would be repetitive of its mandate as described above.

Through assessment of applications for development activities on land in the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area (ADA), the Authority contributes to the vision of the Department of FFA, that of sustainable renewable resources that are responsibly developed for the social, cultural, ecological, and economic well-being of the province.

Clients:

The clients of the Authority are individuals or organizations who apply through the municipal councils of the City of St. John's; Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's; Town of Pouch Cove; Town of Flatrock; Town of Torbay; Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove; and the Town of Conception Bay South to carry out development on land in the Agricultural Development Area of the St. John's Urban Region.

Activities

The Authority contributes to the 2020-23 goals and objectives of FFA regarding natural resource development. Specifically, the Authority supports Government's commitment to: enhanced utilization, sustainability and public awareness of the forestry, agriculture and agrifoods sector. During the 2020-21 reporting year, this was accomplished through the protection of agricultural land and farm activities within the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area in the review of applications for development activities and by regulating development to ensure consistency with agricultural purposes.

The objective and indicators are derived from the 2020-23 Activity Plan of the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority. The 2020-23 Activity Plan is available on the Department's website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/STLDAAActivityPlan2020-23.pdf>.

The 2020-23 Activity Plan objective and indicators, which will remain the same for each year covered by the plan, are:

Objective 2020-21:

By March 31, 2021, the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority will have worked to ensure development activities in the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area are compliant with the Act and Regulations, thus supporting ongoing, sustainable agricultural development in the area.

Indicators:

- Reviewed all applications.

The Authority conducted e-mail meetings on 11 occasions to review all 19 applications received for agricultural and non-agricultural development within the boundaries of the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area. All applications were reviewed by a quorum of the Authority. Of the 19 applications that were reviewed: six were applications for accessory buildings (i.e., garage/shed); two were applications for drainage ditches; and seven applications were farm related. As well, applications for the following developments were reviewed. One application for a residence, one proposed barn construction, one fence reconstruction, one commercial vehicle repair and one firewood/woodstove sale and storage.

- Rendered decisions.

Out of the 19 applications reviewed by the Authority, 17 were approved and two were refused. Four decisions of the Authority from the 2020-21 reporting year are awaiting appeal to the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Appeal Board.

- Maintained records of decisions.

The Secretary of the Authority maintained and updated a registry of all applications, including decisions.

- Communicated decisions to municipalities within 30 days.

Within 30 days of a decision, the Secretary had forwarded the decisions of the Authority to the applicable Municipalities, which are responsible for informing applicants of the decision, including an explanation of the Authority's decision pursuant to the Regulations. All applications were processed within 30 days.

- Monitored development activities for compliance with Regulations.

Staff members of the Authority regularly perform field work within the St. John's Urban Region Agricultural Development Area and actively monitor development activity to ensure compliance with respect to the regulations during these routine field visits. During the 2020-21 development season, eight monitoring inspections were completed.

Opportunities and Challenges

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020-21, the Authority conducted e-mail and Skype meetings to ensure compliance with the public health guidelines. The Authority typically conducts meetings through these platforms, therefore, the pandemic did not have a significant impact on routine business.

A significant portion of the land-base in the St. John's agricultural area is privately owned. While this land may have been previously used for farming, the current owners may not have the ability or interest to develop it for agricultural purposes.

There are also opportunities to work with municipalities to increase awareness and promotion of agricultural development within their boundaries to a new generation of farmers. Continued consultation with municipalities on proposed developments within the ADA and support from the Department to protect arable land within the ADA increases awareness and illustrates support for future agricultural developments.

Financial Information

Audited financial statements are not required as the Authority is budgeted through FFA. There are no per diems, travel or other costs associated with the administration of the Authority.