



*Provincial Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Annual Activity Report
2007-08*



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2007-08 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results and any variances explained herein.

As a new entity, the Provincial Council focused its energy in 2007-08 on identifying regional and rural issues it should address, understanding its relationship to the nine Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat and developing an activity plan. The Council met four times in 2007-08 in Corner Brook, Portugal Cove, Gander and St. John's.

The Gander meeting took place during the *Visions to Actions: A Roadmap to 2020* conference. This conference provided a unique opportunity for the Provincial Council to meet and discuss regional and rural issues with the Premier, Cabinet, senior provincial and federal officials, Regional Councils, youth and other stakeholders. Following this conference, the Provincial Council developed its activity plan for 2008-11 with a focus on regionalism and partnership development.

The Provincial Council is ready to work collaboratively with citizens, stakeholders and provincial government departments, and to provide input and advice to inform policy development. I look forward to contributing to regional and rural sustainability through this process.

Sincerely,



Sheila Kelly-Blackmore
Chair
Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

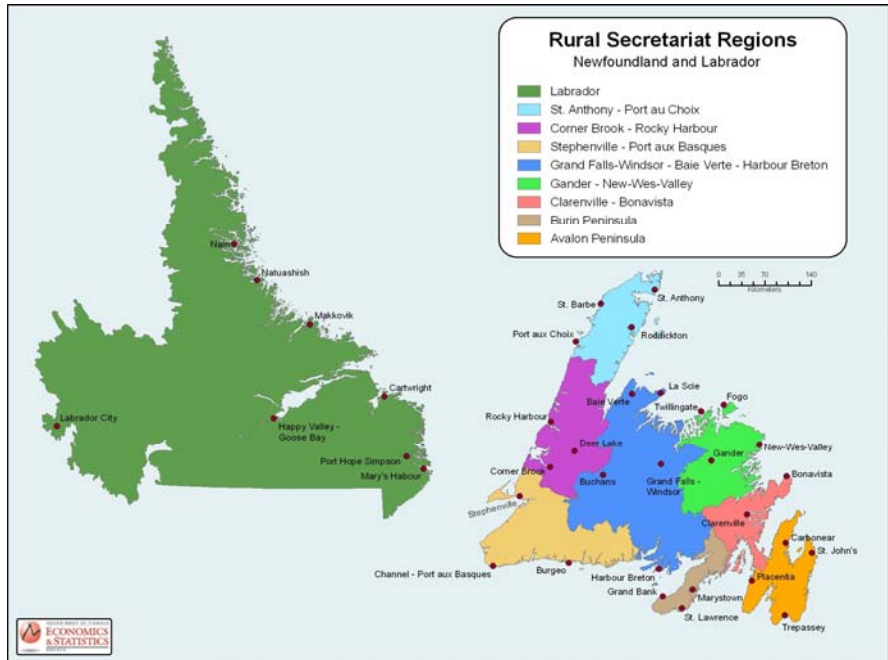
Table of Contents

- 1. Overview and Context 3
- 2. Provincial Council Overview.....5
- 3. Mandate.....6
- 4. Lines of Business.....7
- 5. Values.....7
- 6. Primary Clients.....8
- 7. Vision.....8
- 8. Mission.....8
- 9. Report on Performance.....9
- 10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead.....13
- Appendix A: Strategic Directions..... 14
- Appendix B: Organizational Structure 15
- Appendix C: Mandates of the Rural Secretariat & Regional Councils 16

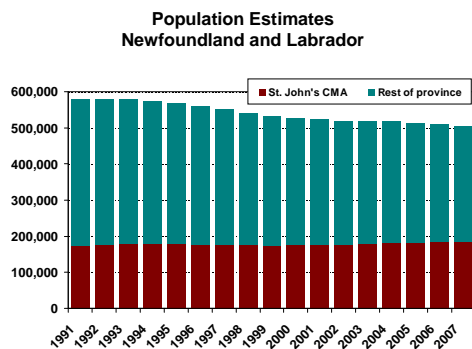
1. Overview and Context

The Provincial Council is tasked with advising the provincial government on policies and programs which either advance, impact or need to be developed to encourage rural sustainability across the province.

The Council's work is framed within a broad, complex and dynamic environment. Council's work also includes a range of provincial and federal government departments, municipalities, industry associations, development agencies, community groups and other stakeholders. The Council sees its province-wide role as bringing forward a broad rural voice to the policy and decision making processes of the provincial government.



The Council also seeks to build on the work of the nine Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat. These regions were established on the basis of economic, social and community activity and by existing transportation networks. Each region includes at least one major service centre offering a range of business, retail and related services, major health care facilities and at least one campus of the College of the North Atlantic. Each region has a number of distinct strengths and opportunities to build on, as well some unique challenges to overcome.



Council members have examined regional socio-economic information and have developed an understanding of the complex economic, labour market, demographic, social, cultural and environmental issues impacting the province and rural areas in particular. It realizes that addressing the issues will be a long term project that will require a comprehensive, dedicated and focused policy approach if rural sustainability is to be achieved.

The Provincial Council realizes that the province's population has declined since the early 1990s, and that population loss is concentrated in areas outside the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area. The Council is particularly interested in youth (ages 15-29) which has been declining in rural areas at a relatively more pronounced rate than for the overall population. In this context, the Council is pleased with the provincial government's commitment to develop a youth strategy.

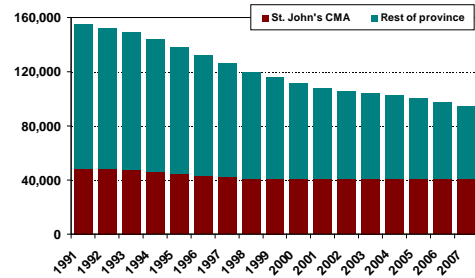
While the population has declined, the Council notes that the labour market (measured in terms of the number of people with employment income) has remained stable, incomes are growing and educational attainment is rising.

In the context of socio-economic trends, the Provincial Council framed its discussions in 2007-08 around six broad policy themes related to regional and rural sustainability. The Council believes that these themes reflect the priorities of citizens, stakeholders and interests throughout all regions and rural areas of the province. These themes include stimulating economic activity, investing in education and skills development, providing high quality publicly funded programs and services, investing in infrastructure, ensuring that municipal governance reflects changing local level needs, and developing partnerships to build regional and rural cooperation and collaboration.

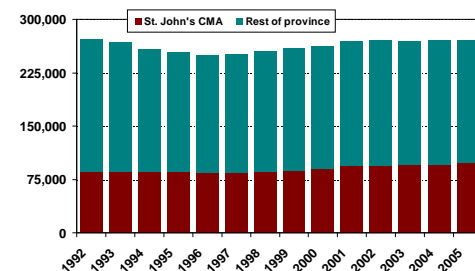
The Council's initial focus, as outlined in its 2008-11 Activity Plan, is on regionalism and partnership development. Council feels that advancing a discussion on these issues with the provincial government and other stakeholders will lay the foundation for discussions on other regional and rural policy themes.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.lmiworks.ca.

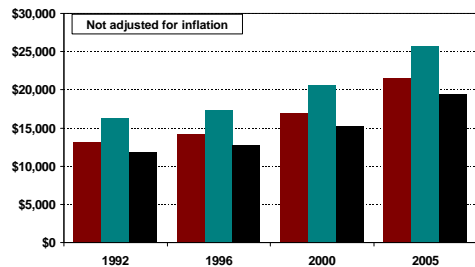
**Youth Population Estimates (Ages 15-29)
Newfoundland and Labrador**



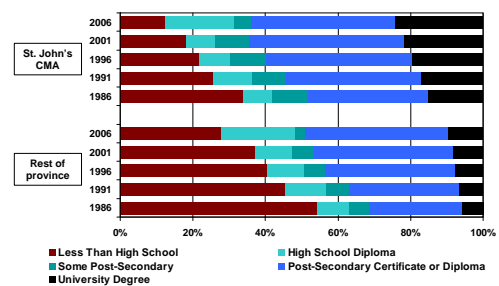
**Employed and Self-employed
Newfoundland and Labrador**



**Per Income per Capita
Newfoundland and Labrador**



**Educational Attainment
Newfoundland and Labrador**



2. Provincial Council Overview

The Provincial Council is comprised of 20 positions, including nine Regional Council representatives, 10 at-large representatives and an independent chair. Among current members, 10 are female and eight are male (there are two vacancies). Members of the Council bring a variety of backgrounds and a wide range of perspectives.

Chair of the Provincial Council: Sheila Kelly-Blackmore, Sandy Cove

Regional Representatives:

Region	Representative	Alternate
Avalon Peninsula	Mr. Kerry Murray Conception Bay South	Ms. Maureen Sullivan Calvert
Burin Peninsula	Ms. Pamela Ghent Harbour Mille	vacant
Clarenville-Bonavista	Mr. Mervin Wiseman North Harbour – Placentia Bay	Ms. Marilyn Coles-Hayley Elliston
Gander – New-Wes-Valley	Ms. Gail Hoyles Gander	Mr. Derm Flynn Appleton
Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton	Ms. Debbie Armstrong Grand Falls-Windsor	Mr. David Hayashida King's Point
Stephenville – Port aux Basques	Ms. Michelle Skinner St. George's	Mr. Kelly Tompkins Codroy Valley
Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour	Ms. Colleen Kennedy Rocky Harbour	Mr. Don Downer Corner Brook
St. Anthony – Port au Choix	Mr. Ted Lewis Croque	Ms. Gloria Toope Plum Point
Labrador	Mr. James Farrell Wabush	Ms. Lori O'Brien L'Anse au Loup

At-Large Representatives:

Reg Anstey	St. John's	President of the Federation of Labour
Mary Broderick	Baie Verte	Vice Chair, Memorial University Board of Regents
Donna Butt	Trinity	Rising Tide Theatre
Al Goss	St. John's	Chair, Board of Governors, College of the North Atlantic
Keith Keating	Marystown	Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador
Penelope Rowe	St. John's	Executive Director, Community Services Council
Kara Snow	St. Anthony	Post secondary student

For a current membership list, please visit our website at www.gov.nl.ca/rural

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

3. Mandate

The Provincial Council's mandate is as follows:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- To review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI 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 advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about 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 meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- To serve as an external sounding board for provincial government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

4. *Lines of Business*

The Provincial Council supports the Rural Secretariat’s two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development.** The Rural Secretariat engages citizens and coordinates the development of partnerships to focus on sustainable regional development and provide direct consideration of regional issues in the development of public policy.
- **Regional Impact Awareness and Action.** The Rural Secretariat conducts research and analysis, and provides informed advice on opportunities and challenges in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5. *Values*

The core values explain the character of the organization. The Provincial Council supports the Rural Secretariat’s core values, listed as follows:

Collaboration	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.
Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others’ views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning Culture	Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Provincial Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat, Cabinet and Deputy Ministers of the provincial government.

The Council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The vision of the Rural Secretariat is of sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

The work of the Provincial Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat. Through its work, the Council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability throughout the province. The Council is taking an inclusive approach to sustainability that considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Council. It represents the key longer-term result that the Council will be striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the provincial government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The Council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat is as follows:

By 2011, the Provincial Council will have reviewed the work of each Regional Council in order to have developed a common understanding of the province's economic, social, cultural and environmental realities, as well as regional commonalities and differences.

9. *Report on Performance*

In its 2007-08 Activity Plan the Council identified two goals (objectives). This section outlines each objective, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken to advance its achievement.

The Council's goals, objectives, measures and indicators for future years are identified in its Activity Plan for 2008-11. This plan is available on-line at www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/publications.asp

The activities and performance of the Council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the Council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various stakeholders at the regional level, and supported the development of regional forums to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The Council recognizes that these strategic directions are long term in nature and believes that its activities in 2008-09 and beyond will further support these directions.

Objective 1: Environmental Scan

1. **By March 31, 2008 the Provincial Council will develop a common understanding of the province’s economic, social, cultural and environmental realities, as well as regional commonalities and differences.**

Measure Common understanding of provincial realities is developed

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<p>More detailed discussion on provincial economic, social, cultural and environmental realities</p> <p>Regional commonalities and differences are considered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four meetings held to get more detailed discussion on Provincial Council priority issues and regional sustainability (which encompassed economic, social, cultural and environmental development). • The June 2007 meeting focused on Council’s role and included a meeting with Minister Trevor Taylor (Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat) and Minister Kathy Dunderdale (Chair of the Economic Policy Committee of Cabinet and Minister of Natural Resources). Council stated that economic policies and programs must be flexible and reflect change in rural areas. It also indicated that it was prepared to engage in policy debate. • The September 2007 meeting included a session with Minister Taylor and a session with Regional Council Chairs. It included a focused discussion of transportation and municipal infrastructure with government departments related to social and economic priorities. Council, in partnership with the nine Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat, initiated the development of a conceptual framework by which it could develop priorities for discussion with government. • The November 2007 meeting was held with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers. It included detailed discussions and break-out sessions on economic, social, cultural and environmental realities in rural areas of the province.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The February 2008 meeting was focused on developing an activity plan and identifying a priority issue. Council agreed that regionalism and partnership development would be its initial focus. The Council's plan to address this priority is outlined in its 2008-11 Activity Plan.

Objective 2: Discussion with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers

2. **By March 31, 2008 the Provincial Council will have discussed and identified provincial opportunities and challenges that reflect regional commonalities and differences with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers.**

Measure Provincial opportunities and challenges that reflect regional commonalities and differences are discussed with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
<p>Meetings are held with Cabinet</p> <p>Meetings are held with the Deputy Ministers on Regional Development</p> <p>Detailed discussions related to identified opportunities and challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council met with Cabinet on November 9, 2007 during the <i>Visions to Actions: A Roadmap to 2020</i> conference. The discussion focused on the need to focus on youth, and the role of the Council in providing input and advice on regional and rural sustainability. All Deputy Ministers sit on the committee related to Regional development. Deputy Ministers attended the <i>Visions to Actions</i> conference and engaged with the Council on policy issues and themes. Council met with Ministers Taylor and Dunderdale in June 2007. This session focused on regional and rural issues and the Council's role in putting forward input and advice to address these issues.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2007-08
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The June 2007 meeting included a discussion of the Rural Lens, a key tool to ensure that regional and rural considerations are addressed by government in its decision-making processes. Council agreed that the Rural Lens should be implemented. • Council met with Minister Taylor in September 2007. This session focused on the planned <i>Visions to Actions</i> conference, and the role of the Council in advancing issues at the conference. • Council met with the Clerk of the Executive Council and the Deputy Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Transportation and Works. The discussions with the Deputy Ministers were focused on issues of Regional Development related to transportation and municipal infrastructure, both to update the Provincial Council on current provincial government initiatives, and to provide an opportunity for the Council to give feedback on these initiatives and other concerns related to Regional Development.

The Provincial Council seeks to focus its efforts on stimulating dialogue related to long-term, broad-based opportunities and challenges facing regions and rural areas. This is a long-term process that will require engagement and collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in all regions as well as the provincial government.

The Council believes that its efforts in 2007-08 have allowed it to make advancements in this ongoing dialogue process. Council has provided an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities, perspectives and expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust.

10. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is all-encompassing and long-term in nature, the opportunities and challenges faced by it are similar to those of the Regional Councils. It is these opportunities and challenges that guide its members in their work and provide them with the drive to move their agenda forward over the course of the year.

Collaboration

Collaboration requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to work together for mutual gain. It requires citizens, stakeholders and interests to step out of their 'comfort zones' and to look at issues through multiple perspectives and lenses. While the Council is committed to regional collaboration, it is aware that this is a long term project.

Long-term thinking

Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the Council, is necessary if regional sustainability is to be achieved. Thinking long-term will be challenging for citizens, stakeholders and interests given that there are immediate issues to be addressed.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens, stakeholders and interests to inform public policy development. The success of this process will hinge on the ability of participants to listen to each other, and discuss issues in an open, informed and respectful manner. Continued citizen engagement is key in achieving its vision.

Appendix A

Strategic Directions

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.

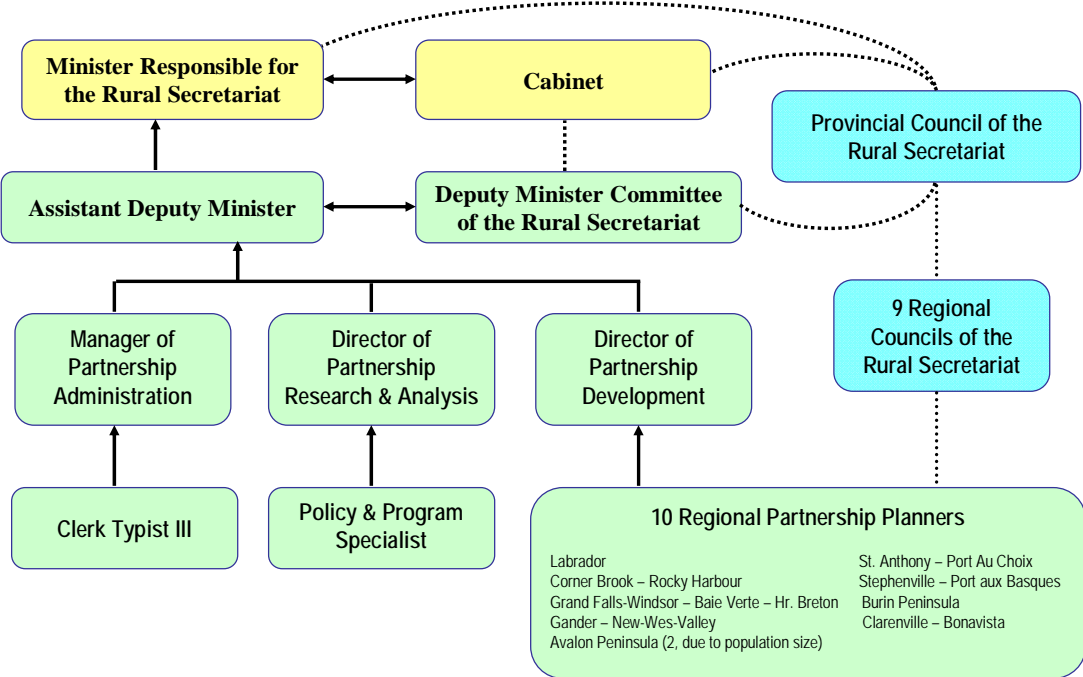
2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

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.

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of 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 regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or 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 economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

Photo Credits:



Marble Mountain
Photo Compliments of Greg Wood



Battle Harbour
Photo Compliments of Gerald Crane



Grand Bank Water Front
Photo Compliments of Greater Lamaline
Area Development Association



Change Islands
Photo Compliments of Lynn Pardy



Springdale
Photo Compliments of Adrian Brett



Icebergs in St. Anthony Harbour
Photo Compliments of
Marc Bastarache



Ramea
Photo Compliments of Sam Organ



Cape Race
Photo Compliments of Irish Loop
Development Board



Cabin, Princeton Pond, Bonavista Peninsula
Photo Credit; Ed Vincent



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