



*Corner Brook- Rocky Harbour  
Regional Council of the  
Rural Secretariat,  
Executive Council*

*Annual Activity Report  
2006-07*



## *Message from the Chairs*

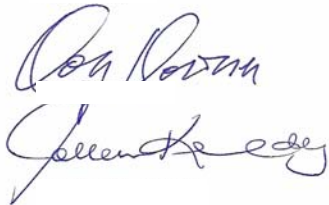
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As Chairpersons for Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council, we hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2006-07 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, our respective signatures are indicative of the council's accountability for the results and any variances explained herein. The 2006-07 Annual Activity Report for the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat has been prepared in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. We have taken the strategic directions of the Minister responsible for the Rural Secretariat into account (Appendix A).

This is the second year of development for the Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat. In this region, we are building on the facts, presentations and policy perspectives that were provided in the first year. A 2020 vision has been developed and we are using this to engage communities, groups and individual citizens. Our aim is to develop common understandings of issues facing this region and what we must do to ensure a prosperous future. We want to determine if there is agreement around the priorities and vision that we have developed. The perspectives and information we gather in this process is communicated at the provincial level and we are just starting to begin discussions with provincial government departments and officials.

Over the 2006-07 year, we identified four priority areas that we believe are critical to developing a strong region. We are beginning to develop rationale, identify areas in which gaps or barriers exist and the needed policy directions to achieve our vision for 2020. We have taken a systematic approach to community engagement and have started by meeting with municipal leaders and youth to further this work. While we work within a changing environment, the uniqueness of this role in long-term planning and sustainable development results in informed citizens and meaningful regional discussion so that we have options and can create or are prepared to take advantage of future opportunities.

We look forward to working more collaboratively with citizens, government departments and other stakeholders throughout the region.



Don Downer and Colleen Kennedy  
Co- Chairpersons, Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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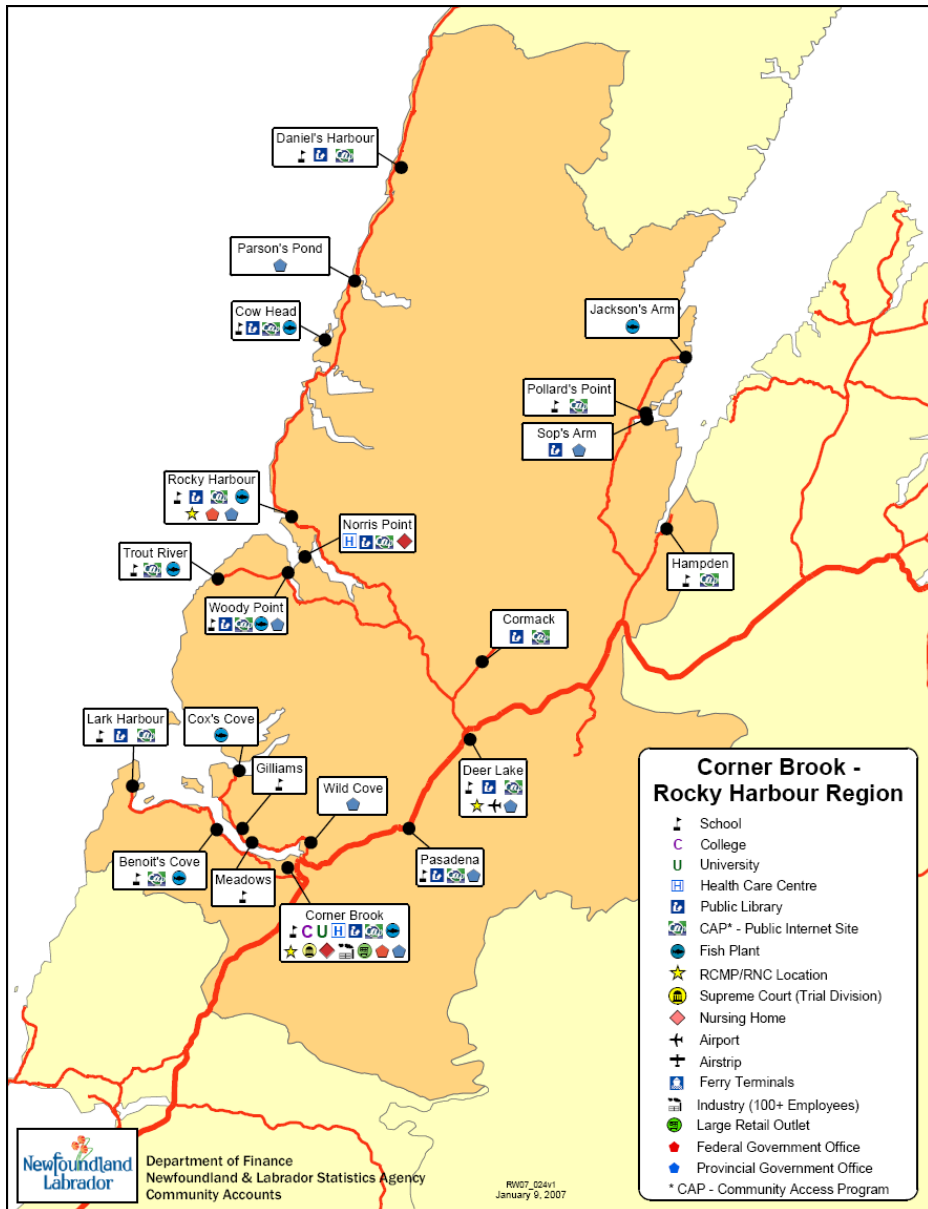
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# Overview of the Region

The Corner Brook - Rocky Harbour Region includes the surrounding area of Corner Brook and White Bay South to Jackson's Arm extending north to, but not including, River of Ponds.

The region is the fourth largest Rural Secretariat region in geography (15,830 square kilometers)

and in population (45,495). There are 43 communities, of which 28 are coastal (65%) with over 26 (60%) of the communities below 500 in population. The largest community is Corner Brook, which is the western regional headquarters for the Provincial Government and the urban center for western NL. There are five other communities of over 1000 population – Deer Lake, Pasadena, Humber Arm South, Irishtown-Summerside and Rocky Harbour.



## Regional Council Overview

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The Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour Regional Council is comprised of twelve members: seven females (58%) and 5 males (42%). Members of the council have a variety of backgrounds that include social work, education, marine biology, economic development, physiotherapy, business, public sector, tourism, electrical and nursing and post-secondary student/youth. Membership is stable with attendance and participation at meetings being consistently high. The council's present representation is from larger and smaller communities throughout the region:

Name	Community
Juanita Brake	Corner Brook
Bertha Brophy	Daniel's Harbour
Gina Caines	Corner Brook
Joan Cranston	Norris Point
Don Downer, Co-Chair	Corner Brook
Phillip Hicks	Corner Brook
Darrel House	Cow Head
Colleen Kennedy, Co-Chair	Rocky Harbour
Colleen Kennedy-Costello	Pasadena
Roger Keough	Parson's Pond
Cyril Kirby	Deer Lake
Carla Wells	Corner Brook

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

The council does not have a budget. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat. The Rural Secretariat also funds a staff position within the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and is responsible for the facilitation of the work of the council. The staff person for the Corner Brook-Rocky Harbour region is Doris Hancock and the office, which is co-located with a number of government departments, is in Corner Brook.

## *Mandate*

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The mandate of the Regional Councils is:

- 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.
- 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.

## *Highlights and Accomplishments*

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In the 2006-07 year, seven Regional Council meetings were held throughout the region. We worked with approximately 50 partner agencies through meetings, consultations, education sessions, research initiatives, conferences and other events. Council Co-Chairs also participated in 2 meetings of the Provincial Council and the October, 2006 Dialogue Day held in Rocky Harbour.

Nine presentations were developed and delivered for community/government groups and others were received from the Humber Economic Development Board, Red Ochre Development Board, the Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development (INTRD), The Center for Environmental Excellence and the Leslie Harris Center for Regional Policy Development. We developed priorities, a vision statement and a systematic approach to community engagement that has council members and the regional planner working collaboratively. Meetings with individuals and communities are on-going. As of March 31, 2007 eight sessions involving approximately 140 individuals were held.

As a result, increased knowledge and understating about the complexity of change in communities, regions and this province has been achieved. We have had significant discussion on demographics, skills development, infrastructure, regional governance, public and private services, and economic development relative to the Western Regional Diversification Strategy with the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development (INTRD).

Regional strengths, assets and investments, that are needed to move forward, have been identified. Priority areas have also been identified. There is a readiness for more specific information and discussion as we deal with work to date and future policy issues and options. The community engagement process has just started and needs time to work through the process. It has shown that the value and thinking of the council, while purposefully informed, is similar to the broader population in preliminary community sessions. There is a positive energy in the region and communities are starting to work together and realize the value in doing so more than ever before.

## *Opportunities and Challenges Ahead*

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- Geography, distance and sometimes climate, are barriers in developing a sustainable rural economy. Increased connectivity through transportation and broadband improvements present opportunity but readiness for development and realization of the development may take longer than the present 10 to 15 year time frame to realize.
- We have a diversified economy but investment in infrastructure, education, innovation and attitudinal change are needed to develop a regional approach that supports increased global competitiveness in rural areas/ regions.
- As economic and employment opportunities develop, having a skilled, literate and available work force will be a challenge given demographic shifts, an aging and declining population and changing communities.
- This process has potential that is just being realized. However, attitudinal or cultural change is time consuming; long term planning is under continuous pressure from current fiscal, human and political realities but needs to continue.
- Regional sustainability and thinking regionally are coming to a new level of public awareness but are not broadly understood nor practiced.
- Cross sector collaboration at the municipal , regional and provincial level is even more important than ever before and is unlikely to happen without support and encouragement.
- In order to sustain regional council participation and interest, the manner in which this process and regional councils impact provincial policy and budget decision making needs to be communicated over the next fiscal year.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration, as each council defines it, requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to make decisions that will maximize benefits for the whole and not just a piece of the whole. This kind of collaboration provides opportunities and benefits that would not otherwise be possible. It also poses a challenge for individuals to step out of their 'comfort zones' and look at issues differently.

### **Long-term thinking**

Long-term thinking will continue to be both an opportunity and a challenge. Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the council, provides an opportunity to set a shared goal for the region and to, collectively, define the steps required to achieve the goal. Thinking long-term will also be challenging for individuals and groups when there are immediate issues surfacing within regions.

### **Citizen Engagement**

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens to directly influence public policy development. This citizen engagement process is a purposeful, deliberate process to engage citizens in a two-way conversation with government decision-makers. This process is not limited to the citizens that sit on the councils of the Rural Secretariat; rather there is a process for the broader citizenship to engage in a discussion about the future policy directions of government. The challenge will be to truly open our minds, listen to each other and discuss issues in a respectful manner.

### **Vision Development**

The vision document that has been developed by the council is not intended to achieve a final form, but rather the intention is for it to continue to be a working document. The vision document identifies what we want to see 15 to 20 years out. Today that time frame is 2022-2027. In five years time, that time frame will be 2027-2032. As priorities are accomplished new priorities will be identified. This will provide an opportunity for us to be informed about what is moving and changing in our regions, where the next opportunity will be and where the next challenge will be. It will also provide a challenge for all involved to have faith in the process and realize that it will take time until these priorities are accomplished. It takes time to make significant change and it is important for this council to remain focused on the future, even in the midst of immediate challenges.



# Appendix A

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## 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.

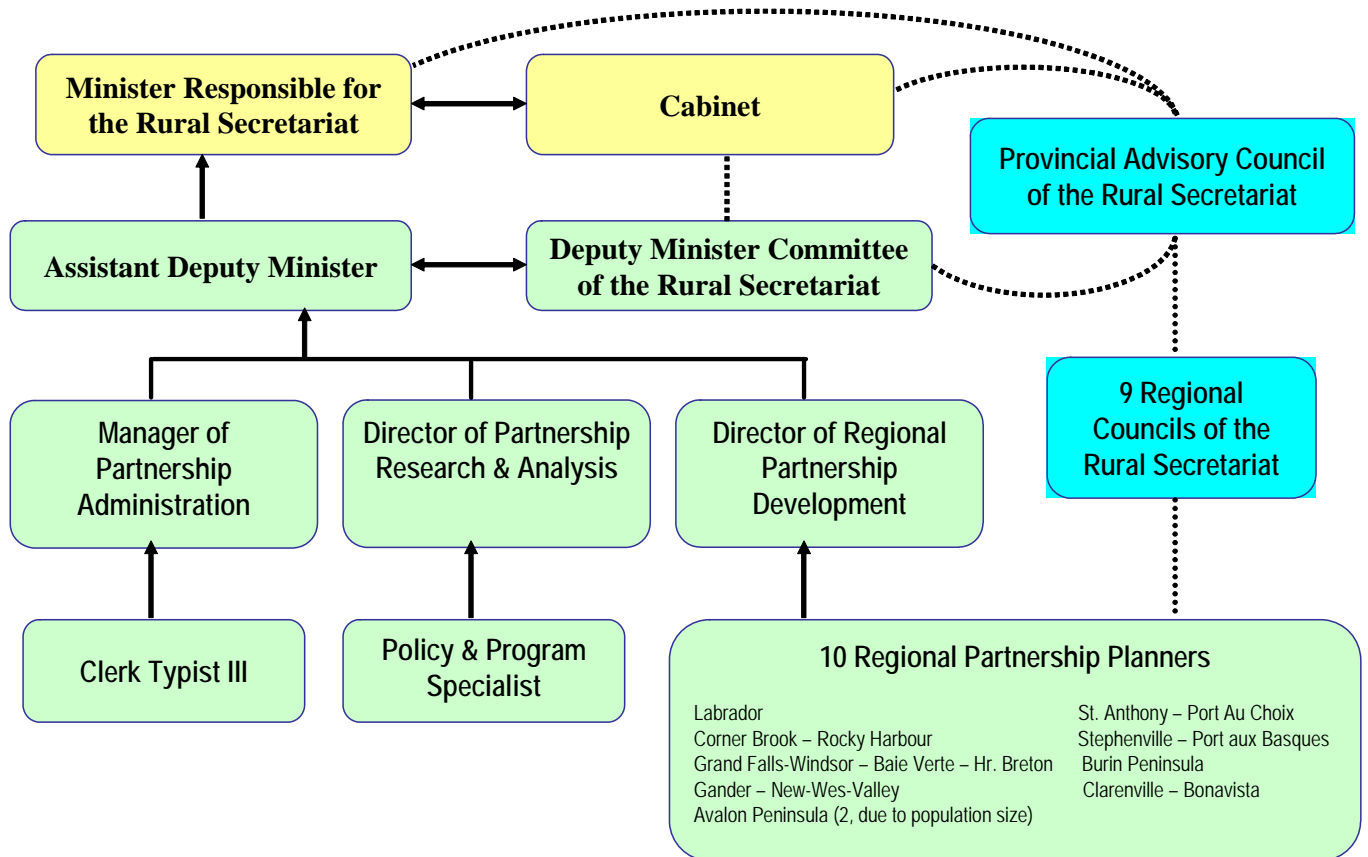
**2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability**

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

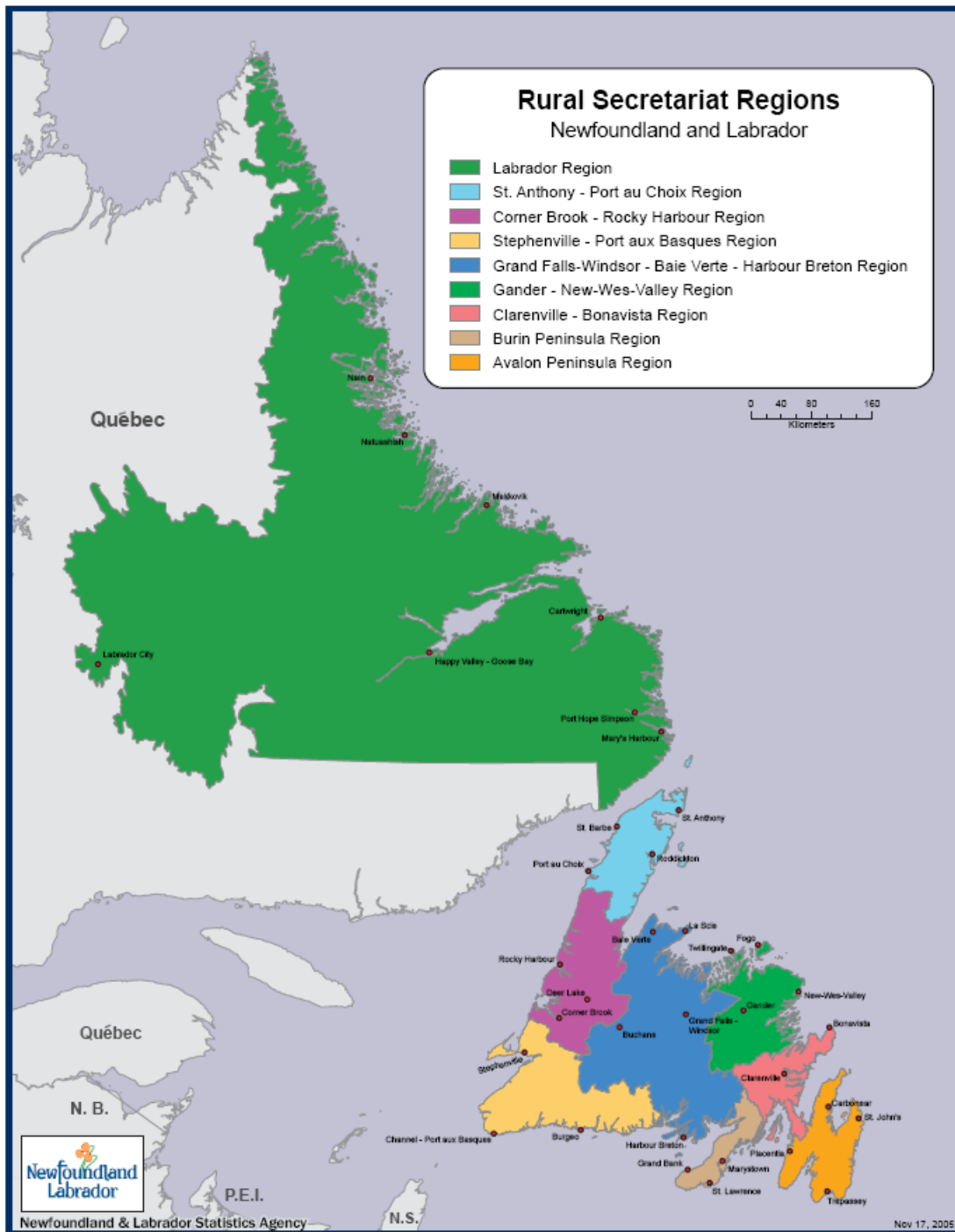
**Clarifying Statement:** This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

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

# Rural Secretariat Structure



# Appendix C



### **Mandate of the Rural Secretariat**

#### ***The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:***

- 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 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 the province.
- 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.
- Identify and advise government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- 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.
- Meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

PHOTO CREDITS:



Bonne Bay  
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Corner Brook  
Photo Compliments of Daniel Baldwin



Marble Mountain  
Photo Compliments of Ali Johnson



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