



Stephenville –
Port aux Basques
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council



*Activity Plan
2007-08*

Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat and in accordance with Government's commitment to accountability, I hereby submit the Council's 2007-08 Activity Plan. My signature below is on behalf of the entire Council and is indicative of our accountability for the achievement of the objectives contained in the plan, pursuant to section 7(4) of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

Since our initial meeting in October 2005, the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council members have engaged in discussions and activities to increase our understanding of the region. In addition to spending time exploring both the challenges and the opportunities in the region, we have also explored the term regional sustainability. Specifically, we have challenged ourselves with questions such as: What is a region? What does it mean to think regionally? How would you define sustainability? What are the key characteristics of sustainability? Why is sustainability important for the region? During this process, Council members have considered the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the region. Council members realize that as we go forward, we will continue to learn about each of these aspects.

The Council has been challenged with thinking regionally and thinking long-term. On a go forward basis Council members will continue to challenge themselves as well as others with thinking regionally and long term.

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council is continuing to work towards building a complete/further understanding of regional priorities. To address the challenges and maximize the opportunities, Council members will begin to identify and build upon regional strengths and priorities. It is important that everyone begins to understand that as the Council members work to advance regional priorities, it is not something that can be done in isolation. This will be about citizens and Government(s) approaching it with a shared responsibility. All of us must come to understand the changes that are taking place and the affects of those changes. Together, we can make informed decisions to ensure we have a sustainable region for future generations.

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will build a common understanding of our region and will be prepared to share our advice with citizens of the region and with Government, with the hope that this advice will influence policy development that will maximize opportunities within our region.

Sincerely,



Robin Davis
Chair
Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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Regional Council Overview

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council is comprised of eleven members; five female and six male.

The Council members have a variety of backgrounds and experiences that cut across an array of sectors that include the fishery, health care, social economy, private sector and education.

The Council has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region:

Name	Community
Allister Hann	Burgeo
Eric Legge	Cartyville
Kelly Tompkins	St. Andrews
Audrey Gracie	Kippens
Margaret Gaudon	Port au Port
Ruth Forsey-Gale	Robinsons
Calvin White	Flat Bay
Michelle Skinner	St. Georges
Susan Fowlow	Stephenville
Robin Davis	Stephenville Crossing
Jamie Warren	Channel - Port aux Basques

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

Regional Council members are committed to meeting four times per year. Their work is focused by three questions:

1. What will your region look like in 15 years?
2. What do you want it to look like (a vision)?
3. What policy and program framework will be required to bridge the gap?

To date, Council members have been engaged with discussions around question number one and to a lesser degree question number two by looking at the demographic, social and economic challenges as well as opportunities within the region.

It is through utilization of research and evidence that the Councils promote discussions on the long-term future of regions. There are many different groups/Government departments/organizations that are looking at the short-term requirements and that is extremely important, however, members of the Councils have been tasked with looking

at the longer term and working to ensure we are on the right path. The Regional Councils promote a shared sense of responsibility between Government, communities and industry for the future development of regions. Councils want to share information and challenge people inside and outside Government to take a long, hard look at what is happening in our communities and regions. More importantly, Councils want to explore where those changes are taking us. This requires recognition that the status quo cannot be maintained and requires us to start thinking realistically about what our communities will look like in the future. We want to build viable communities within a sustainable region.

In addition to the Regional Councils, there is also a Provincial Council which has representation from each of the nine regional Councils and some at large members. The provincial Council will meet with Cabinet and senior departmental officials twice per year. Their role is to advise Government on issues and/or concerns with regard to policy and program requirements especially as it relates to advancing social, economic, environmental and cultural sustainability within regions and the province.

The Stephenville – Port aux Basques region will look differently in the future and we need to begin to plan today for future generations.

The Regional Council does not have a budget allocation. 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 Stephenville – Port aux Basques region is Sam Organ. Sam works out of Stephenville.

Mandate

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.

Values

The core values of the Rural Secretariat which also guide the behaviour of the Regional Council are as follows:

Core Values
 Collaboration
 Creativity
 Empowerment
 Inclusion
 Learning Culture
 Transparency
 Trust

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.

Primary Clients

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

Over time, the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

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 Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat. Through its work, the Council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability. The Council is taking an inclusive approach to sustainability that considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

Mission

The mission statement of the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat is as follows:

By 2011 the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have participated in annual forums and annual dialogue with Government and within regions that will show the value of two-way conversations between citizens and Government.

Indicators:

- A clearly identified, long-term vision of sustainability for the region
- Ongoing two-way conversation between Government and citizens
- Citizens that are more informed about the social and economic conditions required for regional sustainability
- Enhanced regional input into priority and policy setting of Government

- Deliberative, purposeful, inclusive conversations that are informed and meaningful are becoming part of the business process for the Council and Government
- Government and citizens appreciate the kind of discussion that they have been having and see the value of these discussions
- Government and citizens are building trust
- Citizens and Government both feel ownership in the decision-making process and feel a shared sense of responsibility for regional sustainability
- Sustainable solutions are identified at the regional level
- Innovation and creativity is encouraged and supported at the regional level
- Regions have leaders who are influencing others as they adapt to the changing realities of their regions

This mission statement is written for the next four years, however, the work of the Council is looking ahead 15 years. Advancing regional sustainability takes time and involves a considerable learning process. Citizens and Government must build trust and must be willing to listen to and learn from each other.

Over the next four years, the Council will take steps to advance regional sustainability. First, regional priorities will be developed and communicated within regions and to Government departments. The next step will be to explore ways the Council together with regional partners and Government departments can work together to advance these priorities. Over time, these priorities will evolve as we make accomplishments and come to new understandings of the changes that are taking place within the region.

One of the ways the Council will work with Government is through representation on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat which meets directly with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers. This representative will contribute to the discussion of provincial priorities in the context of regional distinctions.

Issue/Context

First and foremost, Regional Council members realize that planning for the long term is very challenging and that in order to make decisions that will contribute to regional sustainability, the Council must have an understanding of the region, its challenges and its opportunities.

While each regional Council member was appointed based on their diverse backgrounds, experiences and knowledge of the region, they have had to take time to learn about the entire region. There are sub-regions within the region and Council

members have been learning from one another about these sub-regions and the strengths and assets of each. Each Council member contributes a broad knowledge base to the discussion. Also, the Council has had to balance the roles of Government, individuals, groups and organizations within the region. Council members have and will continue to share information among themselves and others to assist with the learning and to help better understand the various roles.

The Council, as per its mandate, has been developing “a common, evidenced-based understanding of the economic, social, environmental and cultural realities of the region.” It has considered information on, among other things, demographics, labour market, and education levels.

Council members have come to learn that public policy significantly impacts upon regional sustainability. The structure of the Rural Secretariat provides Council with a real opportunity to influence the development of public policy. The influence may not be immediate, but, over time the impact of information provided by Regional Councils will begin to shape some of these public policies. Identifying priorities is the first step in this process. Regional Council members will develop priorities that are sustainable, achievable, realistic and affordable. This approach will ensure they achieve the desired result.

The regional priorities identified by the Council will be informed by a citizen engagement process. The goal is 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. As the process continues to unfold, Council members will decide how they wish to participate. Some will participate by assisting the regional planner with identifying various citizens for engagement, others will set up sessions with various groups for the regional planner, and over time, some may assist the regional planner by hosting and co-facilitating. Another level of participation by Council members will include the day-to-day conversations they have with others in their communities, at meetings, informal meetings within the community, and so on.

Priorities identified by the Council will be communicated to Government in three primary ways. First, the Council will communicate priorities directly to the Minister responsible for the Rural Secretariat. Second, the Council will discuss relevant priorities with Government departments. Finally, the Council will have a representative on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, which meets directly with Cabinet and Deputy Ministers.

Goals (or objectives):

1. By March 31, 2008 the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for the sustainable development of the region.

Measure: Refinement of long-term regional vision for sustainable development

Indicator: Completion of a working document that is shared with regions and Government

2. By March 31, 2008 the Stephenville – Port aux Basques Regional Council will have clarified regional priorities that have been identified as key elements in attaining the vision.

Measure: Clarification of identified regional priorities

Indicators: More detailed information and discussion related to identified regional priorities

Initiation of the development of a framework to further guide discussion within the community and Government to advance regional priorities

3. By March 31, 2008 the citizen engagement process initiated in December 2006 is broadened to more citizens.

Measure: Citizen engagement process is broadened

Indicator: Engagement of individuals or small groups within regions

Engagement of community groups, e.g., church groups, student Councils, senior's groups, etc.

Engagement of formal groups, e.g., health boards, school boards, economic development organizations, etc.

Engagement of mixed groups that include representation from community and formal groups, as well as individuals within regions who have participated in previous engagement sessions

Feedback from the citizen engagement process informs the vision document and key priorities of the region

Appendix A

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.


Components of Strategic Direction	Included in activity plan	Activity has been implemented	Activity modified for inclusion in next activity plan
a. Partnership Development within regions, between Government and regions	✓		
b. 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

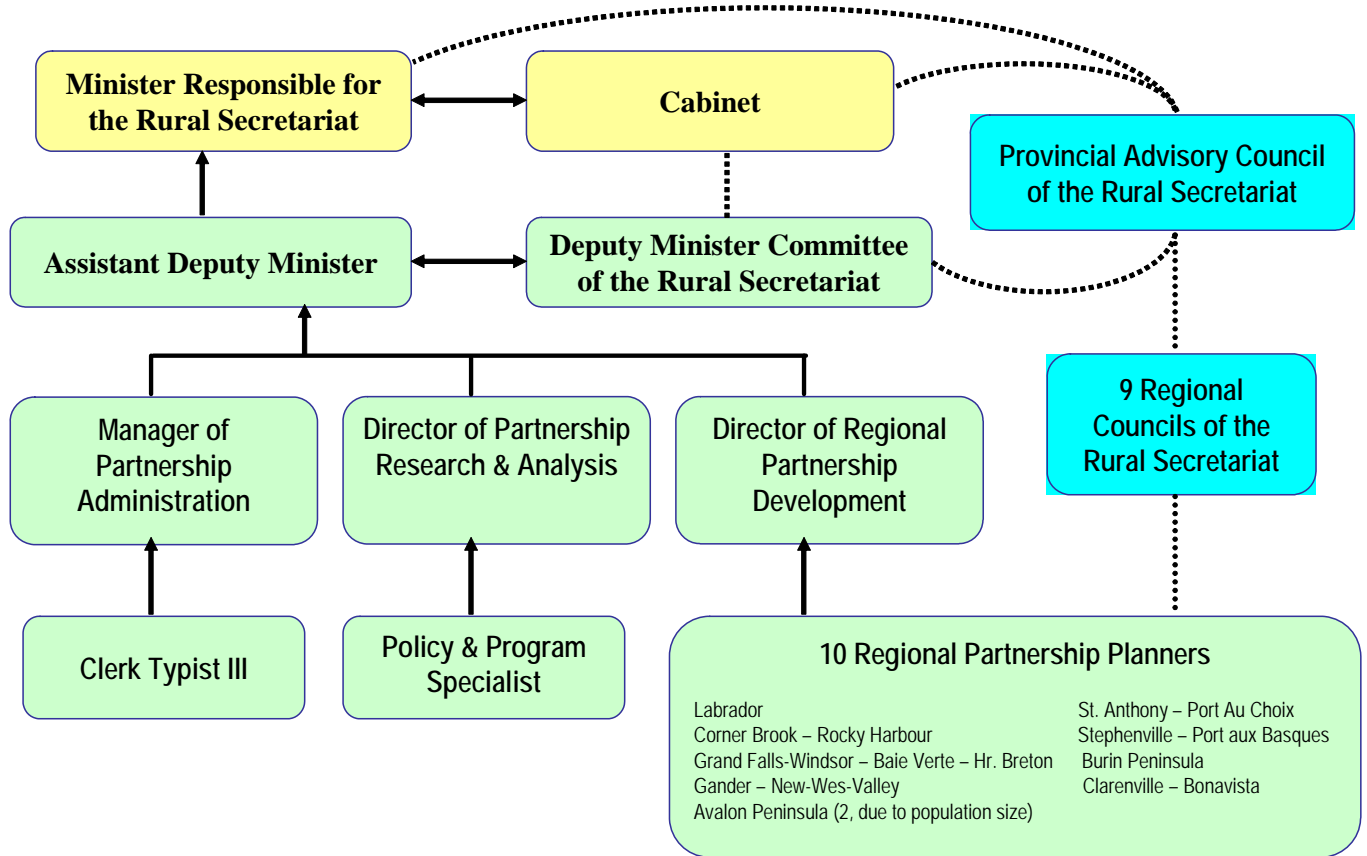
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

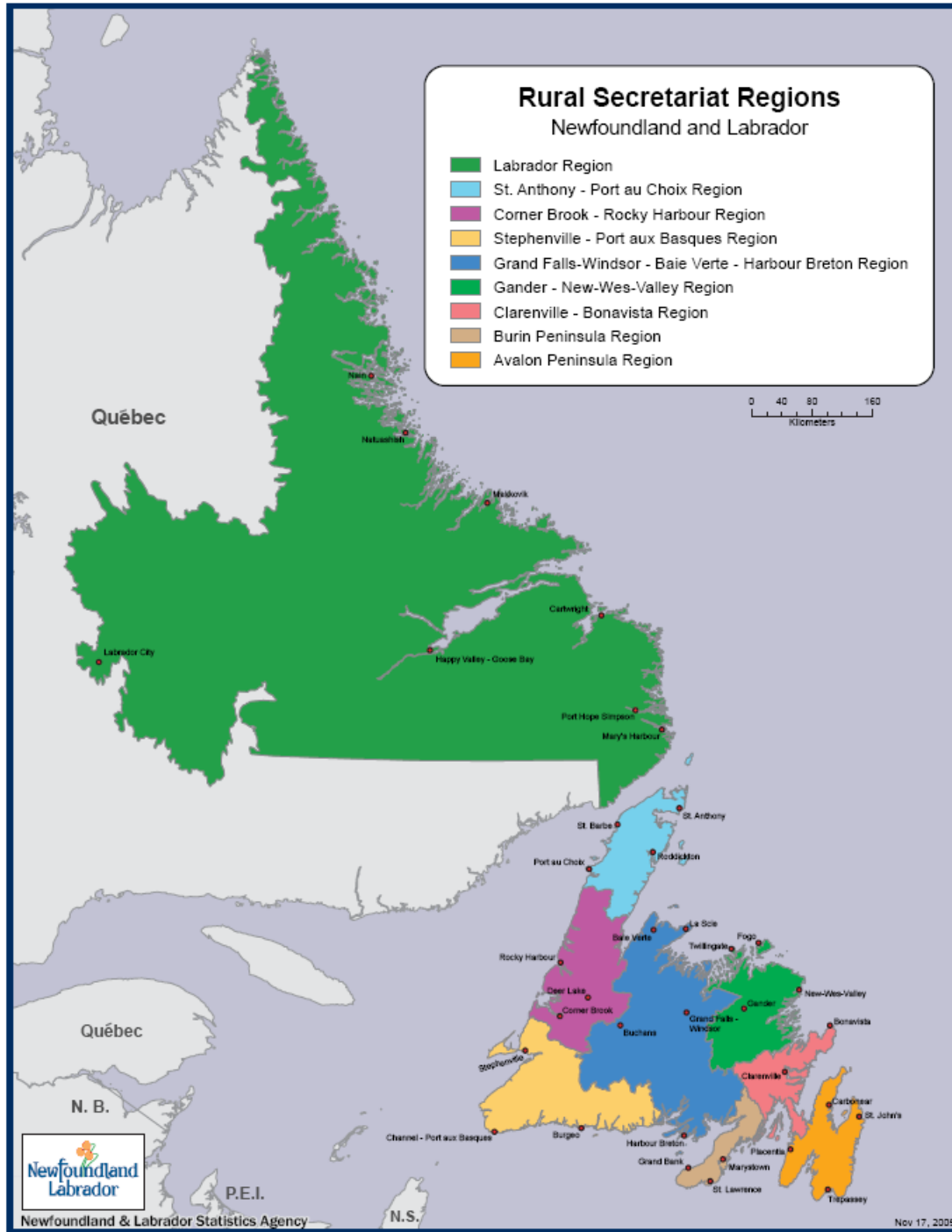
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy.

Components of Strategic Direction	Included in activity plan	Activity has been implemented	Activity modified for inclusion in next activity plan
Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy.			

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C



Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat 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.

Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council Mandate is to:

- 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 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 Government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

PHOTO CREDITS:



Seal Brook
Photo compliments of Roger Spencer



Lapoile
Photo compliments of Transportation & Works



Port aux Basques
Photo compliments of Zone 10
Regional Economic Development Board



Burgeo
Photo Compliments of Transportation & Works



Stephenville
Photo Compliments of Sam Organ



La Grand Terre
Photo Compliments of Zone 10 Regional Economic
Development Board



Rural Secretariat

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