

Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton Regional Council Vision Development



McCallum

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The Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat focuses on the sustainable development of all regions of the province. It promotes information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within government and between government and communities. It facilitates horizontal thinking on regional issues and is focused on the long-term sustainability of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. The secretariat conducts research, develops processes and tools, and engages citizens to enhance the consideration of regional issues in public policy development.

The Regional Council

The regional council is comprised of members from larger and smaller communities, males and females who bring a diverse background in experience and expertise.

To view a current list of the members, please visit our membership list on our website: www.gov.nl.ca/rural



Rural Secretariat

*Regions & Government
Working Together*

What is a Vision?

This document represents a vision that has been created by the Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton regional council. It is intended to be a dynamic working document that will be adapted as: priorities are achieved, new priorities are identified, community engagement discussions prescribe and as the regions of Newfoundland and Labrador continue to grow and change. The vision will identify what citizens want to see in 15-20 years. Today that time frame is 2022-2027. In five years, 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.



Mill Pond

This Document

This document, written in the future year of 2020, articulates a regional vision providing an overall direction for community and government leaders to influence social, economic, cultural and environmental change. It communicates the cumulative deliberations of Central West Regional Council's realistic visualization of our sustainable region. As with any living document, council's intent is to review and refine this futuristic scenario as external factors and internal conditions change. At this point, council members have reviewed regional strengths and have selected three priorities; aquaculture/fisheries, education and land use. These form the first stepping stones along the path to change. The ideas gathered are the collected thoughts of many individuals. However, to realize the vision articulated here, the partnership and shared action of community, business and government will be needed.

Who We Are

The Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte-Hr. Breton Region (Central West) has a long history of habitation. Maritime Archaic Indians 4000 years ago migrated in search for fish and mammals; Dorset Paleo-Eskimos 2000 years ago mined soapstone for oil lamps and cooking vessels; French and English settlers 400 years ago fought to fish these shores, and where 200 years ago, Beothuk Indians were migrating from the coast to inland hunting grounds.

This land, rich in minerals, stretches from the extensive northeast coastline of White Bay and Notre Dame Bay to the southern coastal waters of Fortune Bay. Central West's Rural Secretariat region has the second largest land mass, 33180 square kilometers, and is situated in the geographic center of the island portion of the province.

In the past, communities dotted the shorelines. People lived close to the resources that sustained them. Today, in 2020, with advances in technology and transportation, most people live within 100 kilometers of seven service centers. Grand Falls-Windsor is the primary provider with Bishop's Falls, Botwood, Springdale, Baie Verte, Hr. Breton and St. Alban's being secondary contributors. Municipal leaders collaborate, sharing personnel, to offer the most advantageous services. Urbanization has continued apace, seeing outlying communities come to rely extensively on natural resources as services have shifted to larger centres.

What We Do

The region has a diverse pattern of economic development. Along with both wild and cultured fisheries, there is a strong industrial base; natural resource extraction and manufacturing exist with knowledge based industries.

The region, with a population nearing 50,000, has 11% of residents under the age of 15 years, 26% over 64 years old and 58% of the population aged 20 – 64 years. The increase in older adults as well as a corresponding decrease in youth and care providers has changed the needs of education and health care. More financial demands have been placed on a smaller work force. Although the workforce has fewer jobs than before, wage levels have

increased. The world of work has changed in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Skilled workers have come to outnumber the seasonal workforce.

During the past 25 years, this region has witnessed tremendous change. Community leaders chose to respond and manage this transitional period rather than allowing globalization and demographic shifts to erode the quality of life. Cultural values, which historically supported Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, will be sustained for years to come. We need to preserve our distinct culture in which adaptability is our greatest resource. The sense of identity is rooted in the land and its inhabitants. We value people helping people in a culture defined by perseverance, innovation and creativity. There is a strong attachment to this culture and sense to preserve it for tomorrow.

How We Do It

Today, in 2020 we see the results of leaders having taken action;

The region specializes in three different but interdependent economic sectors; marine resources, industrial manufacturing, and harvesting of natural resources. The northern coastline communities, Westport to Norris Arm and south coast communities McCallum to Rencontre East depend on marine resources - fishing, aquaculture, shipping and adventure tourism. The central communities of Grand Falls-Windsor and Bishops Falls serve as an industrial base and government center. It is home to a modernized newsprint operation and a cluster of information technology and manufacturing businesses. The region's interior has deposits of gold, copper, zinc, and lead. Central West houses 10% of the province's total number of businesses. Over 65% of businesses belong to the service sector. The number of businesses generating revenue from outside the province has increased in



Duck Pond

Central West. As a result of increased activity, manufacturing, secondary processing of natural resources, tourism development and knowledge based enterprises have expanded. Many of these businesses, some 65%, have less than five employees.

The traditional fishery has created strategically placed enterprises. These businesses offer full time employment year round in a diversified processing environment. The industry is jointly managed by communities of interest, federal, provincial, and industry stakeholders. The principles of sustainability, adjacency and historical attachment are followed for harvesting, processing and transporting product. Productivity and biological diversity of ecosystems are maintained at the same time while supporting regional economies.

Central West region is positioned to trade beyond Canada's borders. The aquaculture industry produces mussels, steelhead trout, Atlantic salmon and Atlantic cod. Secondary enterprises manufacture feed, cages and nets and provide supplies to support services such as transportation, waste disposal, recycling facilities, diving, etc. To further advance the industry, workers can access industrial training while research on developing alternate species for high-value production is on-going. Aquaculture in the region continues to lead the province in research and productivity. A state of the art research facility is located close to grow-out sites.

"Destination Central West Newfoundland" is a successful marketing campaign which attracts tourists from Japan, Germany and Central Canada. Soft adventure tourism products; kayaking, hiking and snowmobiling coupled with interactive cultural activities; whale watching, ice berg watching, community festivals, and dinner theatre draw visitors for authentic, must-do-again experiences.

Artisans capture Central West's heritage, culture and spectacular natural themes through a mixture of uniquely designed products and traditional crafts. Traditional craft skills have been carefully researched, documented and taught to regional youth to secure economic and cultural benefits. Cultural heritage is a strong component of the education system.

This extension of tourism themes and trends has assisted in the development of culturally themed businesses allowing year round ventures to operate.

Visual and performing arts form an integral component of everyday life. Besides enriching the culture and well being of Central West residents, artisans generate economic activity. This vibrant arts community attracts tourists by staging live and interpretative events along with providing cultural education opportunities.

Central West has excellent highway signage and services to capture the sight seeing and touring market as well as offering a wide array of accommodations ranging from inexpensive hostels to four star facilities. This flexibility of services accommodates all budgets. Impressed by the array of hospitality and services, tourists readily express their satisfaction to friends and



The region has an abundance of metals and minerals, softwood and hardwood forests, and a thriving environment for agriculture. As with the fishing industry, the provincial government has regulations guided by principles of sustainability, adjacency, historical attachment and environment. The land, shared by multiple stakeholders, provides optimal value in light of environmental preservation and sustainable development. Prospectors continue to find mineral deposits worthy of commercial production. There is a diversification of manufactured products across all sectors.

relatives.

To meet industrial demand, Newfoundland and Labrador has been seeking additional sources of energy. Exploits River, Round Pond and Island Pond will be contributing hydro electrical power to the provincial grid. Wind and solar energy will be harnessed. Major research will continue on thermal and tidal power. A tidal demonstration project is located within the region.

During the past 20 years, Newfoundland and Labrador has lost many skilled workers to Alberta. To balance the loss, the government has aggressively pursued alternate measures. Nationally, transition barriers previously encountered by highly skilled immigrants were slowly lifted, allowing them to flow into the Canadian system with more ease. For example, numerous restrictions once required highly educated and skilled immigrants to start work at low paying positions.

Today, in Central West, the labour market is supplemented by immigrants being targeted to attract investment and increase productivity. An incentive campaign highlights the need for increased birth rates; family support systems assist females accessing the work force and older workers are used as managerial mentors. These senior employees are offered flexible retirement packages. Our communities are open and accepting to other cultures. The region increasingly provides a compatible sharing of diverse cultural traditions.

To address the need for highly skilled workers; a holistic education system supports children from early childhood intervention programs to K – 12. High school graduates are well positioned with strong skills, attitudes and knowledge to enter post secondary training or the work force. While students can access industrial programs at high school, employers can access affordable workplace training for employees. Work place training addresses literacy, numeracy, and computer skills along with industry specific training. Where desired, apprenticeship students have the opportunity to reach journey person status. It is well accepted that adults participate in life long learning.

Citizens of Central West embrace an effective *Primary Health Care Model* offering an integrated team approach, without losing support for acute and long term care. They take responsibility of their personal conditions pursuing active life styles and healthy food choices. When health care is required, it is universally accessible and timely. An effective communication system supports the preventative care model and strengthens partnerships.

Citizens travel throughout the region for health appointments, recreational activities, shopping excursions and educational needs in addition to daily or weekly work commitments. Gander airport, although outside Central West's region, is an essential service for exporting fresh product to European and North American markets. Other regional goods are transported using the principle of adjacency. A highway connecting the South Coast, Burin Peninsula, and the Avalon Peninsula is indispensable for healthcare, economic and social development of the south coast. Overall economic development and business viability of the region depends on a transportation system strategically constructed and well maintained.

The role of government is widely understood and accepted by community residents. It is an open and transparent government with public policy based on evidence, following informed discussion with citizens, and reflecting a shared sense of responsibility for action. Government, in partnership with regional organizations, assists business owners to access government services in a timely, organized and supportive environment by removing duplication and bridging gaps.



St. Alban's

In Summary

Positioned in the centre, but yet very much a part of an island located in the stormy North Atlantic, we are buffeted, beset, but rarely becalmed. We cling to an island at the mercy of the elements, clime and climate. Like the Beothuks, and all those here before and after them, we have come to know and love this land. We know this temperamental land and how to change not only for the seasons, but for the times as well. The Beothuks were an elemental force. They were dependent upon the bounty of nature. Once exposed to European settlers, whose guns and diseases they could not resist, they were wiped out. Unable to adapt, they retreated to their ultimate demise. There is a harsh lesson here, one our forefathers never forgot; survival demands change.

We are at a turning point. The collapse of the cod fishery, turmoil in the fishery in general, along with depressed prices for many natural resource products showed how little we have progressed despite having come so far. In many respects, the dependence on natural resource extraction and the public sector pointed to continued reliance upon a staple economy, one with a foot still in the fur trade era while the other stretched to reach to the information age. Caught in the middle was the exodus of thousands leaving to find a new life elsewhere. Those left faced a renewed and redoubled burden in an effort to support the social infrastructure. While the diagnosis was grim, the prognosis was not necessarily so. There had been much letting go, resulting in the necessity to concentrate on what can be salvaged and kept. That is where the province was. We did not shrink from the task of rebuilding, every ounce and effort of creativity and imagination answered to the clarion call¹. We cut our losses and moved forward, facing the inevitability of out-migration and job losses.

The idea that creativity and imagination can somehow replace how we traditionally did things appeared to some as a fanciful flight of speculation. The dot.com boom and bust left much doubt about highly touted economic cure alls. Beyond the hype, there remains the solid contribution made by the information and knowledge sectors. Using innovation to work more efficiently or creating products through secondary processing was not dismissed.

The cultural sector while lacking the imposing presence of plants and refineries leaves a discernable mark. The transfer to a more cultural, innovative and knowledge based economy has helped to alter the demographic shift. The foundation of this flurry of activity was the educational system. We recognize that having thriving, sustainable regions requires self-reliance, interdependence, active participation, and a managed approach to growth.

Rural Secretariat

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For additional information on the Rural Secretariat please visit our website at

www.gov.nl.ca/rural

Prepared December 2007

Photo Credits:

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¹ clarion call - a loud and clear note made by a brass trumpet; often used to rally troops