



Avalon Regional Council Activity Plan 2011-14



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Message from the Chairperson

As Chair of Avalon Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat and in accordance with the Provincial Government's commitment to transparency and accountability and the Ministers Strategic Direction, I hereby submit the council's 2011-14 Activity Plan. My signature below is on behalf of the entire council and is indicative of our accountability for the preparation of and achievement of the objectives contained in the plan; pursuant to section 7(4) of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

Since its inception in 2005, Avalon Regional Council has increased its education and awareness of the many challenges and opportunities pertaining to the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of the Avalon region. The council will continue to increase its understanding of the challenges facing the region and identify opportunities to enhance rural sustainability.

During the next three years, we will identify specific issues and opportunities facing the region and provide the Provincial Government with advice on rural sustainability that reflects a rural perspective. We will endeavor to develop recommendations for government to consider, using a variety of methods such as public dialogue, engagement and research.

We look forward to the Provincial Government's response to recommendations put forth by Avalon Regional Council and look forward to an open dialogue of how we can achieve rural sustainability together.

Sincerely,



Des Linehan
Chairperson
Avalon Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

1. Regional Council Overview

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council is comprised of 11 members – seven male and four female. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including seven members from communities of less than 5,000 people.

The Rural Secretariat funds two regional planner positions in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the council and facilitate the work of the council. The planners for the Avalon Peninsula region are Jamilee Fitzpatrick and Michelle Yetman. Their regional offices are located in Placentia and Carbonear.

| Regional Council members | Community |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| John Adams | Harbour Grace |
| Paul Connors | Conception Bay South |
| Lorelei Dean | Holyrood |
| Sheila Lee | Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay |
| Des Linehan | Placentia |
| Jay McGrath | Mt. Pearl |
| Betty Moore | Clarke's Beach |
| Kerry Murray | Topsail |
| Maureen Sullivan | Calvert |
| Brendan White | Northern Bay |
| Dave Woodman | Harbour Main |

For an updated listing of council members throughout the duration of the plan please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp>

2. Mandate

The Regional Council's mandate is:

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

3. Lines of Business

The Avalon Regional Council supports the Rural Secretariat's four lines of business:

Citizen-based policy advice: The Rural Secretariat supports nine citizen-based Regional Councils, and one stakeholder-based Provincial Council, to develop policy and decision-making advice for submission to government. Typically, councils, with the support of Rural Secretariat staff, hold public engagement sessions involving citizens and/or stakeholder group representatives, and conduct community-based research activities, to inform the development of advice documents.

Collaboration: The Rural Secretariat understands that sustainability in rural Newfoundland and Labrador can be significantly advanced through more and better collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments. Sometimes the Rural Secretariat works to support existing rural collaborative processes such as partnerships. Other times they work to help convene new regional collaborative processes such as networks or alliances. The broad goal is to help build a strengthened 'culture of collaboration' in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Research: The Rural Secretariat collaborates with provincial partners on a number of formal research endeavors that help to improve understanding of the challenges facing, and opportunities available to, rural regions of this province. The Rural Secretariat also works directly with regional partners and councils on a host of community-based research initiatives – small regional-level data-gathering efforts that give those involved the information and knowledge they need to effectively advise the Provincial Government on regional and rural policy issues.

Public dialogue and engagement: In addition to supporting councils to conduct public engagement efforts, the Rural Secretariat is also available to assist other Provincial Government departments to design and deliver their own public engagement initiatives. The Rural Secretariat also periodically convenes special deliberative dialogue initiatives on themes deemed to be of particular importance to the rural sustainability of this province, often in partnership with rural stakeholder groups and other government departments.

4. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. The core values of the Rural Secretariat are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Collaboration: | We are committed to building a culture of collaboration within Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond |
| Creativity/innovation: | We strive to transcend traditional ideas, rules, and patterns, and to work together to create new ideas, relationships, and approaches |

- Inclusion:** We acknowledge difference and cherish the views and perspectives of all. We take steps to ensure all have an opportunity to express their views
- Learning culture:** We accept that we have a lot to learn and relish the opportunity to learn more
- Participation/engagement:** We believe citizen/stakeholder/community engagement is essential to the development of good public policy
- Teamwork:** We provide support to one another, work co-operatively, respect differing views and strive to make our work environments safe and enjoyable
- Honesty:** We are open and honest in all our dealings and maintain the highest integrity at all times
- Excellence:** We strive for excellence and quality in everything we do

5. Primary Clients

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

The council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

6. Vision

The Avalon Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Vibrant rural regions and communities where collaborative organizations and engaged and informed citizens work closely with governments to advance rural sustainability

Through its work, the council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

7. Mission

The Avalon Regional Council supports the mission of the Rural Secretariat:

By March 31, 2017, the Rural Secretariat will have worked with regional and departmental partners to improve the sustainability prospects of rural communities and regions.

The Avalon Regional Council agrees with the mission of the Rural Secretariat and will strive to support it by providing advice to government on issues affecting the region. The council will engage citizens, conduct research and work with partners to ensure the advice that is being provided will assist in improving the sustainability of rural communities and regions.

For additional detail please refer to the Rural Secretariat Activity Plan 2011-14.

8. Issues

Issue: Provide Advice to Government

Over the next three years, Avalon Regional Council will strive to meet the mandate that has been set out. In order to do this council will identify issues that affect the sustainability of the region. The council will undertake research of the identified issue to ensure that our discussions and deliberations are well informed on the topic. To do this the council will undertake various forms of research and engage in discussions with citizens and stakeholders in the region on the identified topic. After consensus is reached on a particular piece of advice to be submitted to the Provincial Government, the council will seek the most appropriate way to communicate this to officials.

Council will be providing ongoing advice to the Provincial Government on issues that affect the region. This will ensure that the current Provincial Government is aware of the issues that affect the region and can consider this advice when making decisions. In order to do this effectively, the council will engage citizens, conduct research and work with other partners in the region on the identified issues. This relates to the strategic direction identified in this plan.

The members of Avalon Regional Council will be reporting on the same objective for the three years of this plan.

Objective:

By March 31, 2012 the council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government on issues that relate to regional sustainability.

Measure:

Provided advice

Indicators:

- Issue identified
- Researched issue
- Consensus developed on advice to Government
- Communicated advice to Government

Appendix A: Strategic Direction

1. **Title:** Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

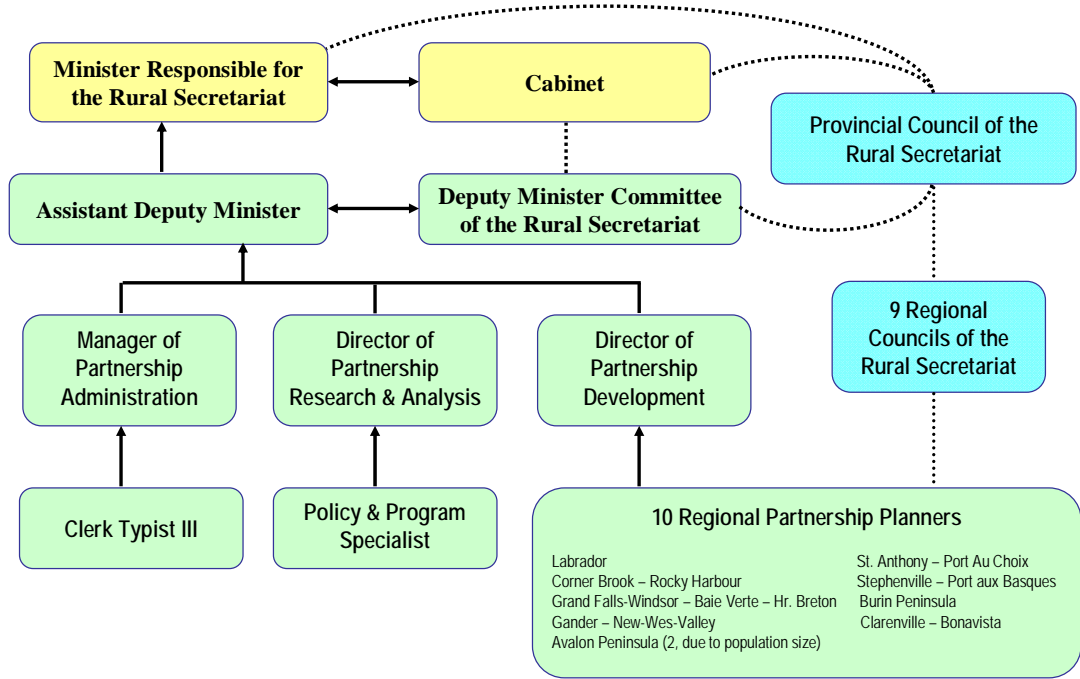
Outcome Statement: A sustainable rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Rural Secretariat in the areas of:

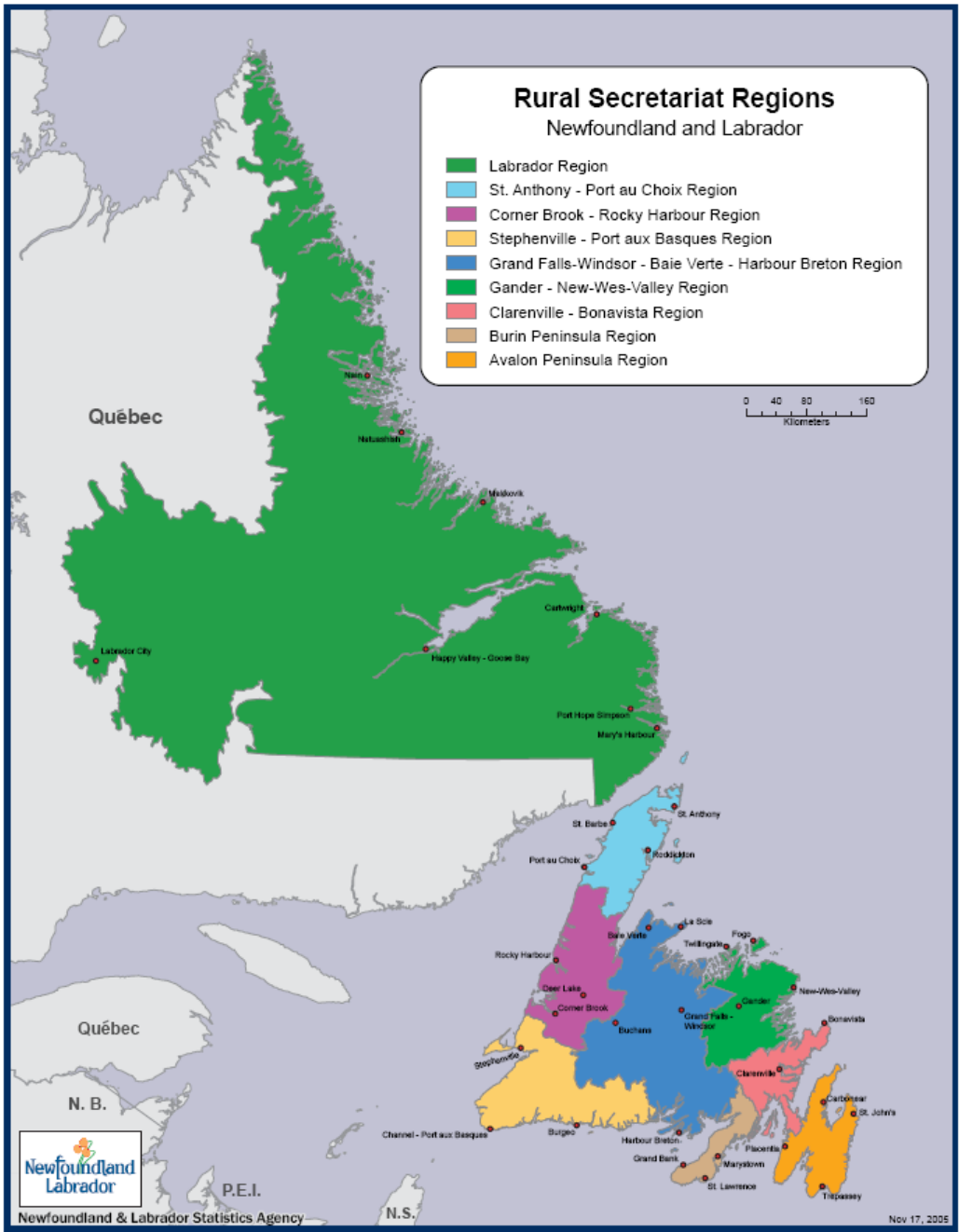
- Citizen-based policy advice
- Public dialogue and engagement
- Collaboration
- Research

| Focus Areas/Components of the Strategic Direction | This Direction is: |
|---|--|
| | addressed in the council's activity plan |
| 1. Citizen-based policy advice | X |
| 2. Public dialogue and engagement | |
| 3. Collaboration | |
| 4. Research | X |

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of rural Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach aimed at integrating economic, social, cultural aspects of rural and 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 rural concerns are considered throughout the Provincial Government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.
- Promote awareness of provincial and federal programs and services regarding rural communities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing Province.
- To review key economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, Employment Income 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 a) advance, b) negatively impact or c) need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- To advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about the 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 serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will effect Provincial and Regional sustainability.

Photo Credits

Cover Photographs



Courtesy of Michelle Yetman



Courtesy of Michelle Yetman



Courtesy of Michelle Yetman



Courtesy of Jenny Rockett



Rural Secretariat

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