



*Gander – New Wes Valley
Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat
Executive Council
Activity Report 2009-10*



Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. On behalf of Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of Council's accountability for the results achieved.

Over the past year, Council has been working diligently to further redefine and develop its vision for regional sustainability. Engaging with the various stakeholders in the region to evaluate the validity of our identified priorities has, and will continue to aid Council in further articulating recommendations regarding policies and programs which will impact the development of public policy and contribute to this region's sustainability.

As our rural communities continue to redefine their governance and stewardship structures, renew commitment to social and economic development activities, and as stakeholder cooperation and collaboration is growing, Council will focus on continuing to foster this climate for regional dialogue and partnering. It is felt that by aiding this continuing process of community and regional capacity building, Council will be providing continuity to the larger, regional communication and planning process. Again, through continued partnership developments and other effective communication processes, Council will act as a catalyst in fostering this bottom-up process of community engagement and development with stakeholders; community, industry, government departments and Provincial Government leaders.

Members of the Gander- New-Wes-Valley Council of the Rural Secretariat remain committed to this process and are pleased with the work of Council to date. Again, with renewed commitment we look forward to continuing this positive working relationship with all partners as we shape the landscape of our changing communities, region and province.

Best Regards,



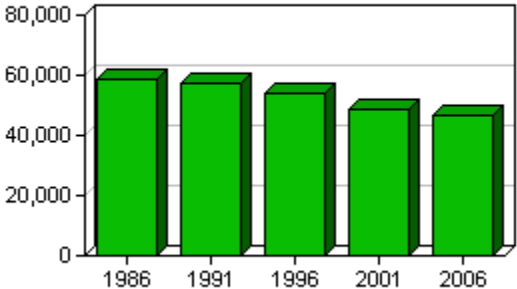
Nadine Decker, Chairperson
Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region

Population



The 2006 Census population for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 46,850. This represents a decline of 3.6% since 2001. Over the same period, the entire province experienced a population decline of 1.5% since 2001 (505,470 in 2006, down from 512,930).

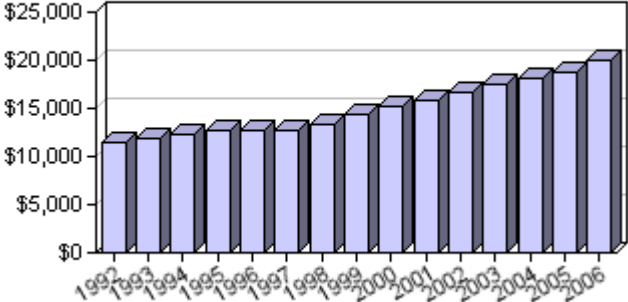
The 2006 income for every man, woman, and child (personal income per capita) in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was \$20,000. For the province, personal income per capita was \$22,900. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$13,400 for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$13,400 for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region in 2006. For the province it was \$14,900.

Half of the couple families in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of more than \$47,600 in 2006. Half of the couple families in the province had incomes of more than \$56,500.

Half of the lone-parent families in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region had incomes of less than \$23,400 in 2006. Half of the lone-parent families in the province had incomes of less than \$25,300.

Personal Income Per Capita



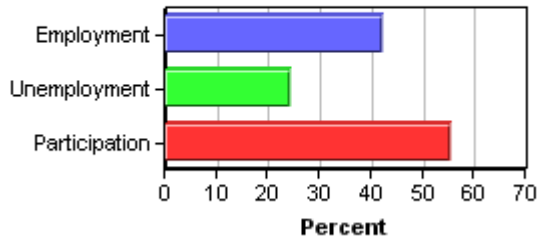
The 2006 self-reliance ratio for Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 70.9%. This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, Income Support Assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio. The provincial self-reliance ratio for 2006 was 78.5%.

According to the 2006 Census, in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region 84.5% of homes were owned versus rented compared to 78.7% for the province and 68.4% for Canada.

The unemployment rate for May 2006 for people aged 15 and older was 24.1%. The provincial unemployment rate was 18.6%.

The employment rate for the entire year 2005 for those aged 15 and older was 59.5%. The provincial employment rate for the same period was 63.3%.

**Labour Market Rates
Population 15 and Older
(May 2006)**



The number of individuals in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region who received Income Support Assistance at some point in the year 2008 was 4,060. The 1991 figure was 11,150.

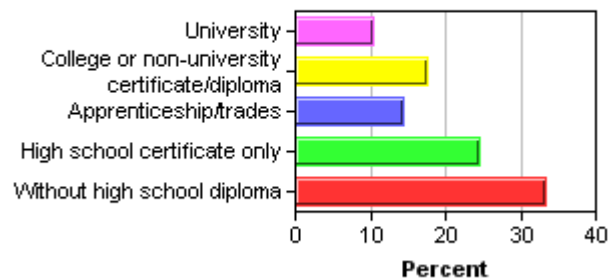
The total number of children ages 0 to 17 in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region who were in families on Income Support Assistance in 2008 was 980. The figure for 1991 was 3,925.

Census 2006 reported 33.3% of people 18 to 64 years of age in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region do not have a high school diploma compared to 25.1% of people in the entire province.

In Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region about 9.0% of people aged 25 to 54 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher in 2006 compared to 15.1% in the province as a whole.

In 2006, in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region, 79.1% of people 25 to 34 years of age had at least a high school diploma. This compares to 85.4% in the entire province and 89.1% for Canada.

Highest Level of Education, Pop 18 to 64



A major indicator of well-being is how a person rates their own health status. In 2005, 66.7% of individuals in Gander - New-Wes-Valley Rural Secretariat Region rated their health status from very good to excellent. The provincial number in 2005 was 64.5%. In 2005, for Canada, 60.2% of individuals age 12 and over rated their health status as very good to excellent.

Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural.

2. Regional Council Overview

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of nine members; two female and seven male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region. The council met five times in 2009-10. Members also participated in engagement sessions, learning events and sub-committee work.

Regional Council members	Community
Nadine Decker (Chairperson)	Joe Batt's Arm
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Edythe Goodridge	Salvage
David King	Twillingate
Rick Lackey	Twillingate
Wayne Perry	Newtown
David Regular	Summerford
James Snow	Lewisporte
Ryan Vincent	Newtown

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

The Rural Secretariat also funds a Regional Partnership Planner position in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the council and facilitates the work of the council. The Planner for the Gander - New-Wes-Valley region is Tanya Noble. Her office is located in the Municipality of New-Wes-Valley.

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 Regional Council mandate 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 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.

4. Lines of Business

The council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates the development of partnerships that focus on sustainable regional development and provides direct consideration of citizens' and stakeholders' priorities, perspectives and expectations in the development of public policy, infrastructure and other financial decisions, and other provincial government action that impacts regions and rural areas.
- **Formulation and provision of policy advice and analysis with respect to regions and rural areas:** The Rural Secretariat coordinates research and analysis on regional and rural socio-economic issues, provides advice and analysis on legislative, financial, policy, program and service delivery matters that impact regions and rural areas. It also influences and informs cross-departmental analysis and evidence-based decision making with respect to regional and rural challenges and opportunities.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of the council and are as follows:

Collaboration	to commit to working together effectively
Creativity	to seek and support new ideas and approaches
Empowerment	to assume responsibility for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions
Inclusion	to acknowledge others' views and perspectives and exercise the right and opportunity to express their own
Recognition	to recognize and value the skills that each bring
Transparency	to share open and objective advice based on sound information and principles
Trust	to be open and supportive when partnering and to follow through on requests and commitments

6. 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.

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

7. Vision

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

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

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the key long-term objective 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 council is as follows:

By 2011, the council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will demonstrate the value of two-way communication between the provincial government and citizens.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the council identified two goals. 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 provided a new regional forum 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 2009-10 and beyond will further support these directions.

9.1 Issue 1: Advancement of Key Elements for Regional Sustainability

The council has compiled an inventory of issues they feel are critical to long-term regional sustainability. Many of these issues have been highlighted and incorporated in the vision document. Each of these issues have to be understood, evaluated and improved upon in order to ensure long-term regional sustainability. In an attempt to focus the learning and work of members, council identifies at a minimum one issue to address each year. As a result of this work, an informed perspective on the issue at hand is shared with government in an attempt to improve public policy, outlining why this issue is important to regional sustainability.

Prior to the 2009-10 reporting period, Council discussed and reviewed the inventory of issues related to regional sustainability and through a voting process identified marine resources, particularly the fishery, as the next topic they would explore.

Goal:

By 2011, the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have initiated a process to communicate regional perspectives on the issues and opportunities impacting the region's sustainability and advised the Provincial Government in the development and implementation of public policy.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have identified additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability and will have developed a regional perspective with the intent to inform the development of public policy.

Measure:

Additional issues or opportunities identified as they relate to regional sustainability and regional perspective developed with the intent to inform the development of public policy.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Research and data collected and reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To advance understanding on the issue of marine resources with a focus on the fishery council considered the following documents, presentations and websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation from the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture on January 15, 2010. Among other thing the presentation focused on the challenges and opportunities the fishery will face in the future. ○ www.fishaq.gov.nl.ca ○ The Future of the Fishery, Round Table Discussion Summary Report for the session held in December 2008 & The Future of the Fishery, Round Table II Discussion Summary Report for the session held in April 2009. ○ Seafood Marketing Review Panel, Report of the Chairman, Report date: February 2008. ○ Report of the Chairman RMS Review Committee, Report Date: November 2005. ○ Fish Processing Policy Review, Final Report, Commissioner, Report Date: December 2003. ○ Canada's Oceans Strategy, Policy and Operational Framework for Integrated Management.
Council engaged citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Engagements have been one-on-one conversations between council members and citizens regarding the future of the fishery. In other cases members have participated in group discussions in their respective communities. At council meetings and sub-committee meetings members have discussed and debated the concerns and opportunities they have heard. These informal conversations, presentations and literature reviewed have guided Council to identify Areas of Focus in the fishing industry. These Areas of Focus include such topics as joint management, possible marketing board, licensing allocations, and the future of fishing stocks to name a few. ✓ Council have outlined and planned a regional learning session that will focus on the future of the fishery and the changes that will be required to enhance future sustainability in May 2010.
Advice submitted to the provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advice letter submitted to the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture on March 12, 2010. Letter also included the Areas of Focus as an attachment.

Based on these accomplishments, the complexities of the issues within the fishery, and the importance of the fishery to the future of this region, the council will continue to focus on marine resources, with an increased emphasis on the fishery, in 2010-11 as a key element for regional sustainability.

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011, Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have provided input and advice to the provincial government on additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability.

2010-11 Measure:

- Provided input and advice to the provincial government on additional issues or opportunities as they relate to regional sustainability

2010-11 Indicators:

- Information (Research, data, presentation, etc) collected and reviewed
- Council deliberated and/or engaged citizens
- Advice submitted to the provincial government

9.2 Issue 2: The Process of Community Engagement

The council utilizes the vision, as well as other means (discussion documents, presentations, forums, etc.) to engage citizens and government on topics as they relate to regional sustainability. The vision is being shared with citizens with an invitation to share feedback to Council. Highlighting and communicating the issues and opportunities will lay a foundation for regional partners and government departments to work together to advance these priorities.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011 the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have expanded its communication (engagement) process and refined its long-term vision for sustainable development of the region.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Gander- New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have refined its long-term vision for regional sustainability.

Measure:

Long-term vision for regional sustainability refined to reflect what the council has heard and learned.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
Review feedback	✓ Council reviewed and summarized feedback from the vision engagement sessions. April 24-25, 2009
Revised long-term vision for regional sustainability	✓ Council discussed and agreed upon the content and format of the revised vision for the region. February 24 th , 2010. Document will be formatted for posting on

Indicator	Accomplishments 2009-10
	the website and circulation in 2010 -11.

In 2007 Council completed a vision document that was shared with government and available to citizens. This document was used to engage citizens and organizations about the future sustainability of the region. Since 2007 this document was available on the website, shared with municipalities in the region and targeted individuals and organizations. The vision document was also circulated at forums and other events. As individuals were engaged with respect to vision document the two most important questions discussed were: Do you feel we have identified the key issues for the future sustainability of this region? Are there other topics you feel critical to future sustainability which have not yet been identified? The results of Council's past work and engagements have been utilized to develop a new vision/communication document. Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2010-11 Objective.

2010-11 Objective:

By March 31, 2011 Gander- New-Wes-Valley Regional Council will have communicated a long-term vision document for regional sustainability.

2010-11 Measure:

- Communicated a long-term vision document for regional sustainability.

2010-11 Indicators:

- Revised vision circulated.
- Revised vision submitted to government.
- Revised vision posted on the Rural Secretariat website.

10. Additional Highlights

The Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is seeking to broaden public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. It aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on these opportunities and challenges. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region. The council feels that its performance in 2009.-10 has allowed it to make advancements in this process.

Council is committed to providing credible advice to government. In order to do so council can initiate and participate in a host of research endeavours that shed light on the realities facing our rural communities. We encourage and work with our regional partners to mobilize community-based or small regional level, data-gathering research initiatives that give the stakeholders involved the information and knowledge to effectively advise government on regional and rural issues.

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, other highlights have been summarized below. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the council in 2010-11. These highlights include:

- The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council submitted an advice letter (October 2009) to the Minister of Health and Community Services and the Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat with respect to the laboratory and x-ray services in Lewisporte. In the submission, council emphasized the importance of applying the Rural Lens and engaging or consulting citizens on matters that impact the region.
- Council partnered with the Grand Falls – Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council in May 2009 to host the Many Voices, One Vision Forum. This session was designed to build relationships and enhance collaboration amongst Regional Councils, Health Authority, School Board and other educational stakeholders, government partners and political leaders at the regional level. A report was generated and collaborative actions identified. A subsequent meeting was held in March 2010 where participants prioritized collaborative initiatives and a team was formed to work through the initiatives.
- Summer 2009 to March 2010 Council partnered with the Rural Secretariat, Memorial University - Department of Geography, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency on a Community Based Research (CBR) project titled "Beyond the Document: Economic and Socio-economic Planning Processes".
- Council provided feedback to the Provincial Council on the Regionalism and Land Use Documents.

In February 2010, Regional Council members participated in a pan provincial video conference with all 9 Regional Councils. The event focused on citizen engagement as the broad topic. The meeting utilized video conference equipment from the College of North Atlantic at 10 locations across the province as well as Turning Point Technologies, an audience response polling technology. This meeting in part was a test case to begin to see how such a model could work for cross regional discussion and dialogue.

- Members attended a regional engagement session with the Minister responsible for the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat in July 2009. This roundtable presented an opportunity to hear regional concerns regarding volunteering as well as an opportunity to voice concerns that have been discussed around the regional council table.
- The Department of Municipal Affairs met with Council September 2009 to discuss the recommendations in the "Municipal Governance" document submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in March 2009. Keith Warren, Director of Regional Cooperation presented to Council on *Regional Cooperation*. Some discussion highlights included the need to review affordability of services in consideration of today's demand and changing demographics as well as future demographic projections in our rural communities. The structure of local governance and succession planning also require future consideration.

- Chairperson and Regional Partnership Planner met with the Department of Education in August 2009 to discuss the recommendations in the “Education: An Inherent Right” document that was submitted to the Minister of Education in March 2009. An important highlight was community access to schools.
- Members attended the Placentia Bay – Grand Banks Large Oceans Management Area (PB/GB LOMA) Planning Session for the Integrated Management Plan, March 2010 in St. John’s. The PB/GB LOMA sought input into the development of social, cultural, economic, ecosystem and governance objectives for the Placentia Bay/Grand Banks Large Ocean Management Area Integrated Management Plan.
- Council was invited to present to the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation (September 2009) and the Town of Gander (May 2009). Both presentations provided an opportunity to highlight the work of Council. The presentation focused on the mandate of Council, some regional demographics, as well as regional opportunities and challenges.
- Chairperson attended the North Atlantic Marina & Recreational Boat Show in Lewisporte on June 19 & 20, 2009. The show presented an opportunity to network with stakeholders in the Marine and Marina fields, learn more about these sectors, as well as share the work and thoughts of Council. A report of the session was shared with Council members.

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the Council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the Council remain fairly similar from year to year. It feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The council’s mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

The council’s mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of

sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and be a conduit for advice to government to advance efforts.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for it is to openly and positively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for it, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

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.

2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

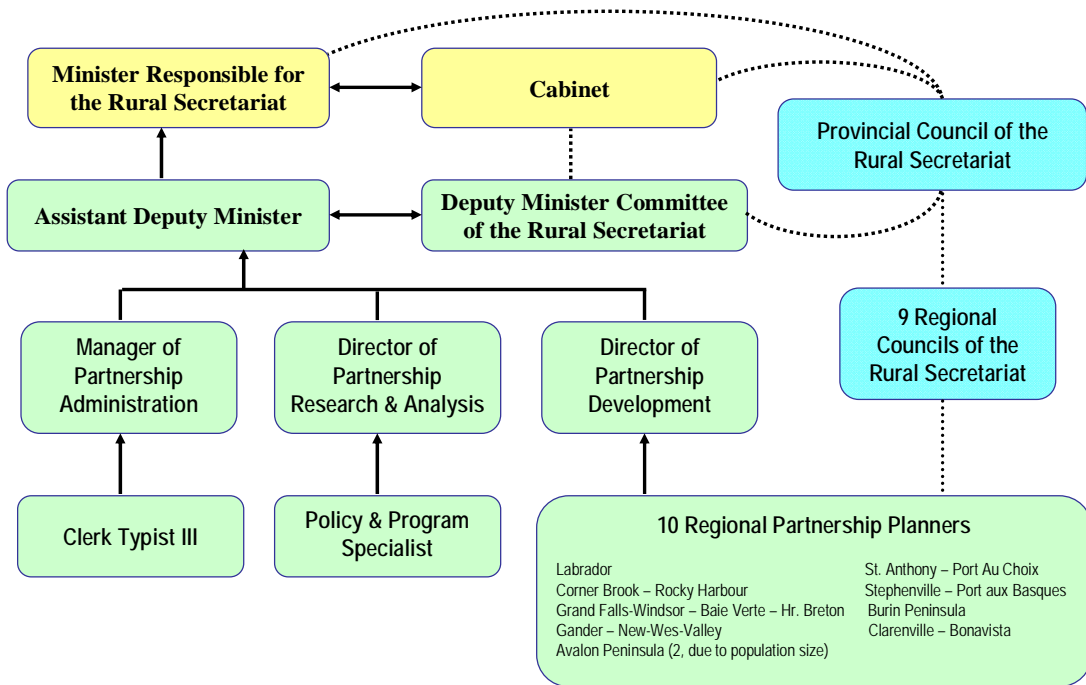
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

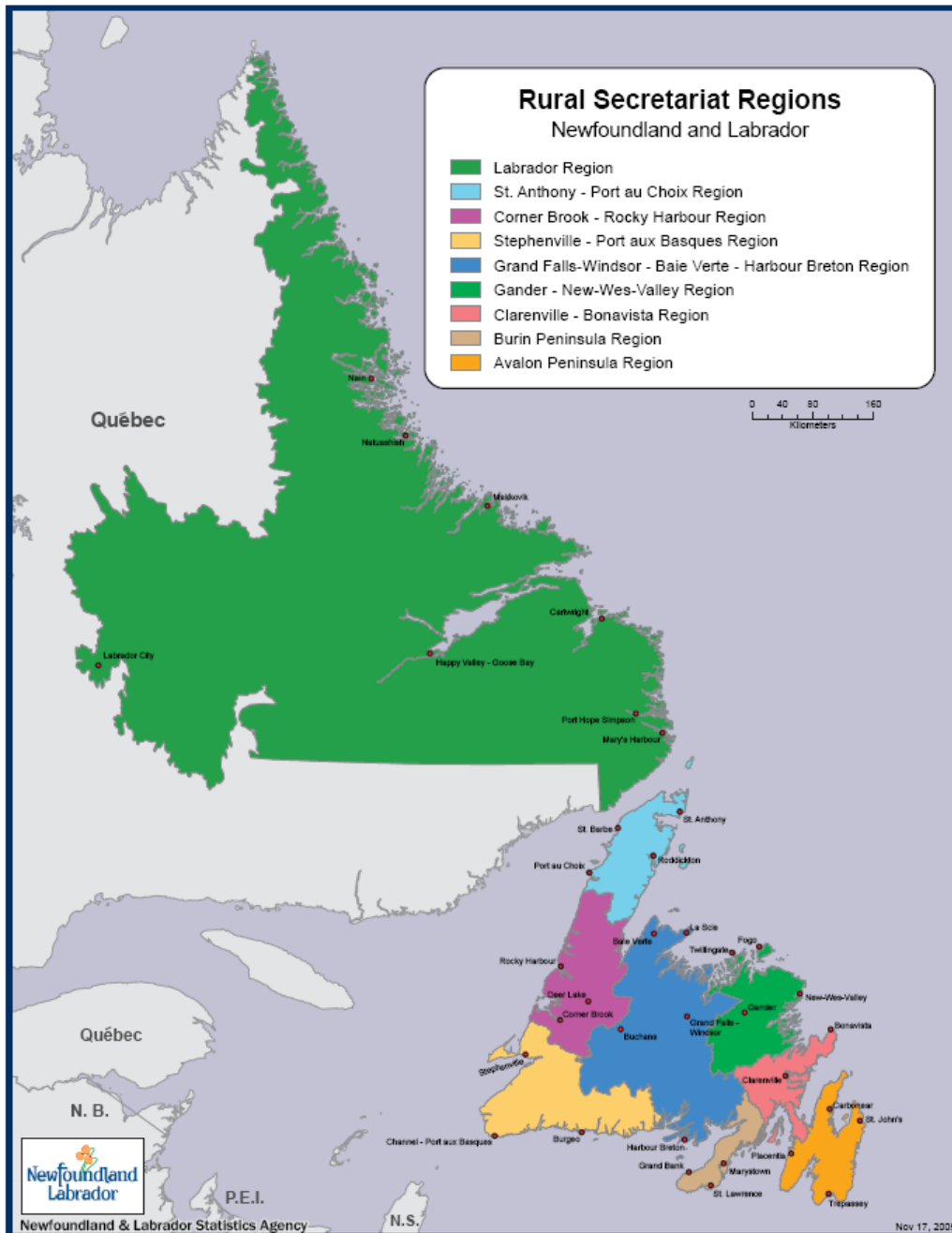
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 Credit:



Photo Courtesy of Wayne Perry



Photo Courtesy of Wayne Perry



Photo Courtesy of Wayne Perry



Rural Secretariat

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