

Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional
Council of the Rural Secretariat

Annual Activity Report
2005-06



Moreton's Harbour

Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2005-06 fiscal year. On behalf of the council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature below is indicative of the council's accountability for the actual results reported.

The Gander-New-Wes-Valley Regional Council was appointed in August 2005 and held its first meeting in October 2005. The contents of this report outline the council's activities for the remaining five months of the fiscal year.

Although a daunting task, the council is committed to exploring long-term solutions for the sustainable development of the region. These first meetings served as an orientation to the council's role and responsibilities. It also allowed the members an opportunity to compile extensive inventories of the region, broaden awareness, and review regional specific information that enabled us to better understand the challenges within the region. In the upcoming months, the council will work towards the identification of regional priorities and will initiate a citizen engagement process to begin to further refine these priorities.

I look forward to the work ahead.

Sincerely,



Edythe Goodridge, Chair

Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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Regional Council Overview

The Gander – New-Wes-Valley Regional Council is comprised of 14 members; 5 female and 9 male. Members of the council have a variety of backgrounds that include; business, municipal representation, education, culture, social, environmental, tourism, and economic development. The council has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region:

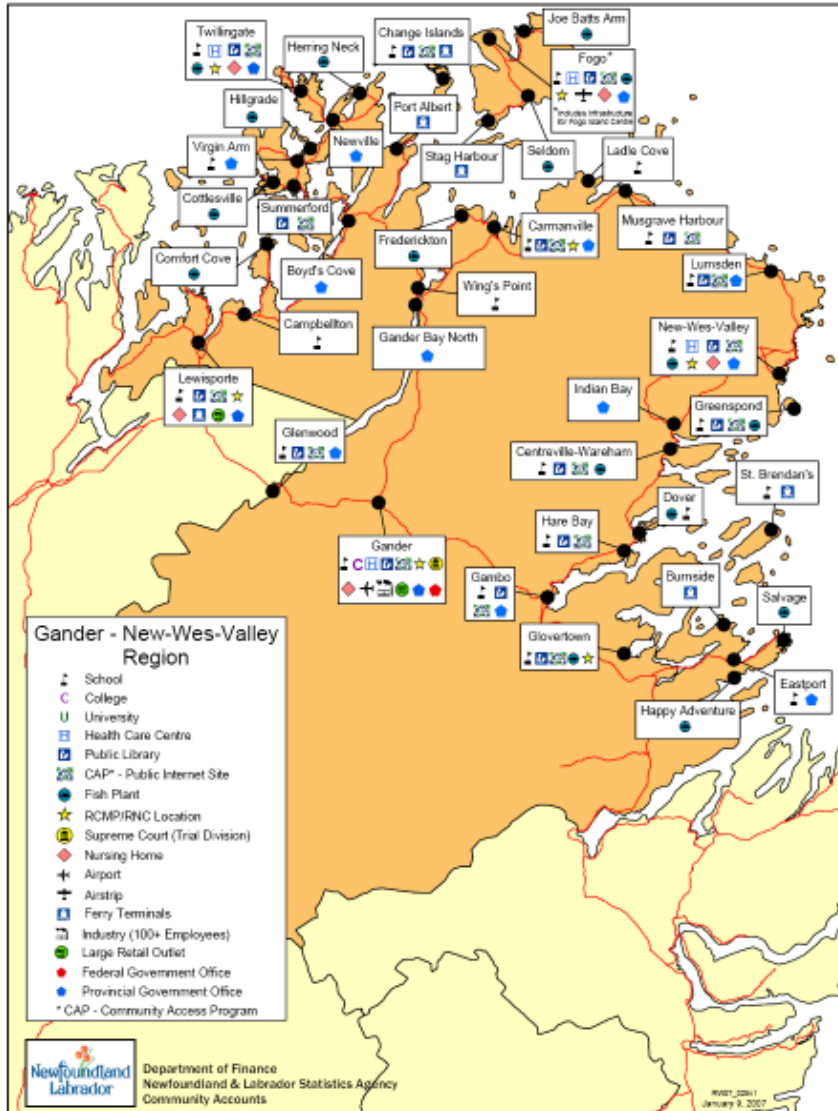
Name	Community
Derm Flynn	Appleton
Victor Cassell	Cottlesville
Tony Keats	Dover
Gail Hoyles	Gander
Mike Harkaway	Gander
Ross Trimm	Clarks Head
Douglas Churchill	Glovertown South
Nadine Decker	Joe Batt's Arm
Wander Loder	Pike's Arm
Edythe Goodridge, Chair	Salvage
David Regular	Summerford
Ruby Ellis	Wesleyville
Jim Snow	Lewisporte
Steven Perry	Newtown

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

The council does not have a budget allocation. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the Rural Secretariat which also funds a staff position within the region. The staff person for the Gander – New-Wes-Valley region is Tanya Noble. Tanya works out of New-Wes-Valley. Among other duties, she acts as an information resource for the council and is responsible for the facilitation of the work of the council.

Overview of the Region

Summary Infrastructure Map for the Gander – New-Wes-Valley Region



The Gander – New Wes Valley Region of the Rural Secretariat spans from Terra Nova National Park in the East to Lewisporte in the West and includes a hundred plus coastal communities in between.

The 2001 Census population for the Gander – New Wes Valley Rural Secretariat Region was 48,595. Located geographically near the center of the region is a larger service town called Gander. Gander accounted for 20% of the regions population (9660) in 2001. The remainder of the region consists of clusters of towns or sub-regions that provide private and public services, as well as some of the region’s economic base.

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.

Highlights and Accomplishments

The council was appointed in August 2005. During the remaining five months of the fiscal year, the council met three times.

The first meeting of the council was held during the Dialogue Day of the Rural Secretariat that took place at Marble Mountain, Steady Brook. This meeting served as an introduction to the role and responsibilities of the council. Information presented to the councils included data on demographics, education and labour market participation. This meeting also provided an opportunity for the council members to meet directly with Cabinet.

Two more meetings were held in Gander by the end of the fiscal year. Up to this time the council was presented with information and began discussions on economic, demographic and social challenges and opportunities within the region.

In its discussions council members have focused on what it means to think regionally and the characteristics of sustainability. Social, cultural, environmental, and economic inventories have been compiled that provide the foundation upon which to identify the issues that are adverse to regional sustainability.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

Collaboration

Collaboration, as defined by members of the council, 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. Such collaboration would provide opportunities and benefits that would not otherwise be possible. It also poses a challenge for individuals to step outside their 'comfort zones' and bring a different perspective for the future.

Long-term thinking

Long-term thinking will continue to offer both an opportunity and a challenge for members of the council to define a shared goal for the region. We must therefore in the course of our tenure, define the steps required to achieve the goal.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens to directly influence public policy development. It is a vital facet of the work of the council and hopefully will be equally valuable to the residents of the region. 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 members that sit on the regional 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 discussion document that is being developed by the council is intended to be a working document. It will identify the critical issues that will have to be addressed in order to effect the change that will be necessary to ensure the future we envision 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.

It is our hope and intention that the discussion document and the public engagement process will expose the undisclosed vitality, energy and optimism of the residents in the region, resulting in the shaping and forging of a new economic environment.

Appendices

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.

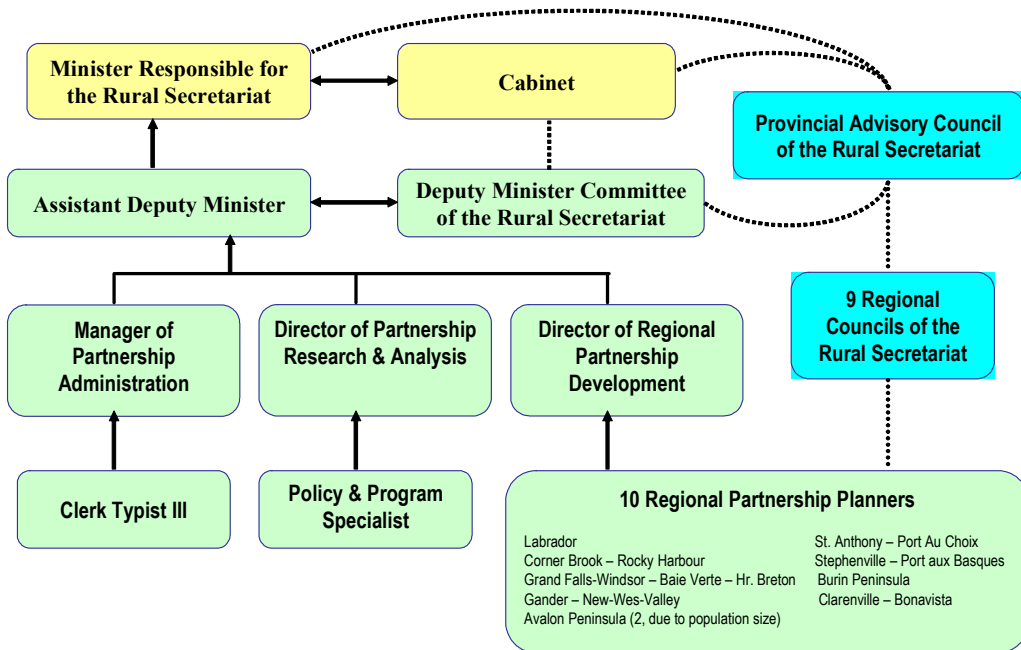
2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability

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



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.



Please direct correspondence for the

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