

Avalon Regional Council of the Rural  
Secretariat

Annual Activity Report  
2005-06



Juniper Lake



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# *Message from the Chair*

As Chairperson for Avalon Peninsula 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 is indicative of the Council's accountability for the results and any variances explained herein.

The Avalon Peninsula 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.

These first meetings served as an orientation to the council's role and responsibilities. The council received regional specific information that enabled it to better understand the opportunities and challenges within the region. Over the coming 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kerry Murray

Chair

Avalon Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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## *Regional Council Overview*

The Avalon Peninsula Regional Council is comprised of 13 volunteer members; 6 female and 7 male. Members of the Council have a variety of backgrounds that reflect both the larger and smaller communities in the region, and include members with a cross-section of business, labour, social, cultural and environmental perspectives. They do not represent any particular organization. Council members are asked to bring their collective expertise and experiences to the table to discuss long-term regional sustainability and development.

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

Name	Community
Anne Manuel	Portugal Cove
Betty Moore	Clarke's Beach
Bride Power	Marysvale
Bruce Pearce	St. John's
Des Linehan	Placentia
Don Case	Salmon Cove
Jay McGrath	Branch
John Adams	Harbour Grace
Kerry Murray	Topsail
Maureen Sullivan	Calvert
Patricia Puddester	Bay Bulls
Paul Connors	Conception Bay South
Sheila Lee	Riverhead, St. Mary's Bay

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

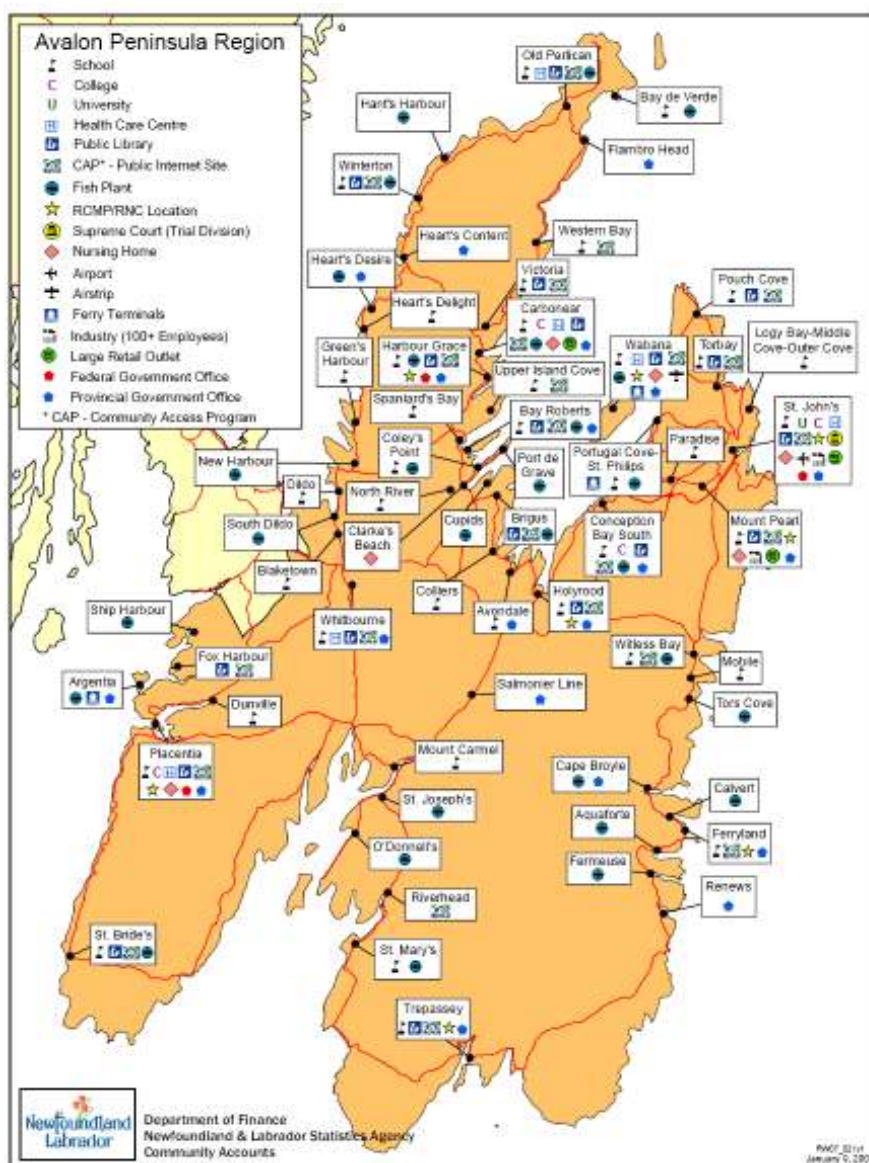
The Council does not have a budget allocation. Meetings of the Council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat. The Rural Secretariat also funds two staff positions within the region, who among other duties, acts as an information resource for the council and is responsible for the facilitation of

the work of the Council. The Council is supported by two Regional Partnership Planners, Jamilee Fitzpatrick and Ken Carter. Their regional offices are located in Placentia at the McCormick Building and Carbonear at the College of the North Atlantic Campus, respectively.

## Overview of the Region

The Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat region encompasses the Northeast Avalon including Bell Island, Conception Bay South, Conception Bay North, Trinity Bay North and the areas of Placentia, the Cape Shore, St. Mary's Bay and the Southern Shore.

The region is the smallest Rural Secretariat region geographically and the largest region demographically. The majority of the population, approximately 71%, live in towns with more than 5,000 people – in our case, St. John's, Mount Pearl, Conception Bay South, Paradise, Portugal Cove-St.



Philip's, Torbay, and Bay Roberts. The region has relatively few people living in small towns.

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## *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 two times.

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

Two more meetings were held in Mount Pearl and Marysvalle by the end of the fiscal year. Up to this time the Council was presented with information on economic, demographic and social challenges and opportunities within the region, and began a discussion about the challenges and opportunities within the region.

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## *Opportunities and Challenges Ahead*

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration, as the Council defines it, 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. This kind of collaboration provides opportunities and benefits that would not otherwise be possible. It also poses a challenge for individuals to step out of their ‘comfort zones’ and look at issues differently.

### **Long-term thinking**

Long-term thinking will continue to be both an opportunity and a challenge. Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the council, provides an opportunity to set a shared goal for the region and to, collectively, define the steps required to achieve the goal. Thinking long-term will also be challenging for individuals and groups when there are immediate issues surfacing within regions.

### **Citizen Engagement**

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens to directly influence public policy development. 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 citizens that sit on the 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.



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## **Vision Development**

The vision document that is being developed by the Council is not intended to achieve a final form, but rather the intention is for it to continue to be a working document. The vision document will identify what we want to see 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.

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# Appendices

**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.

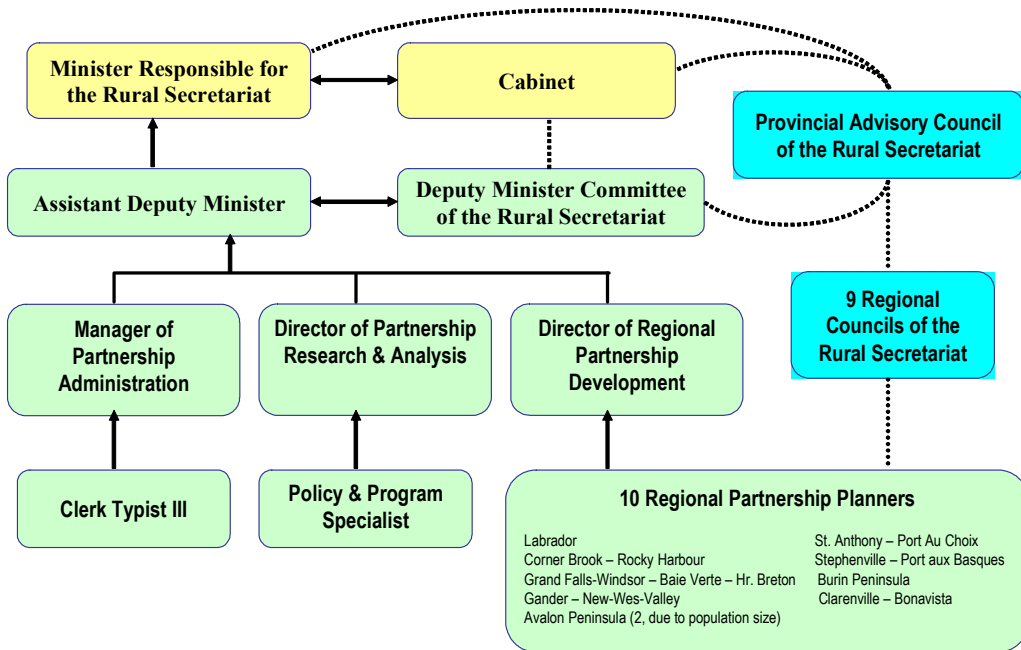
**2. Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability**

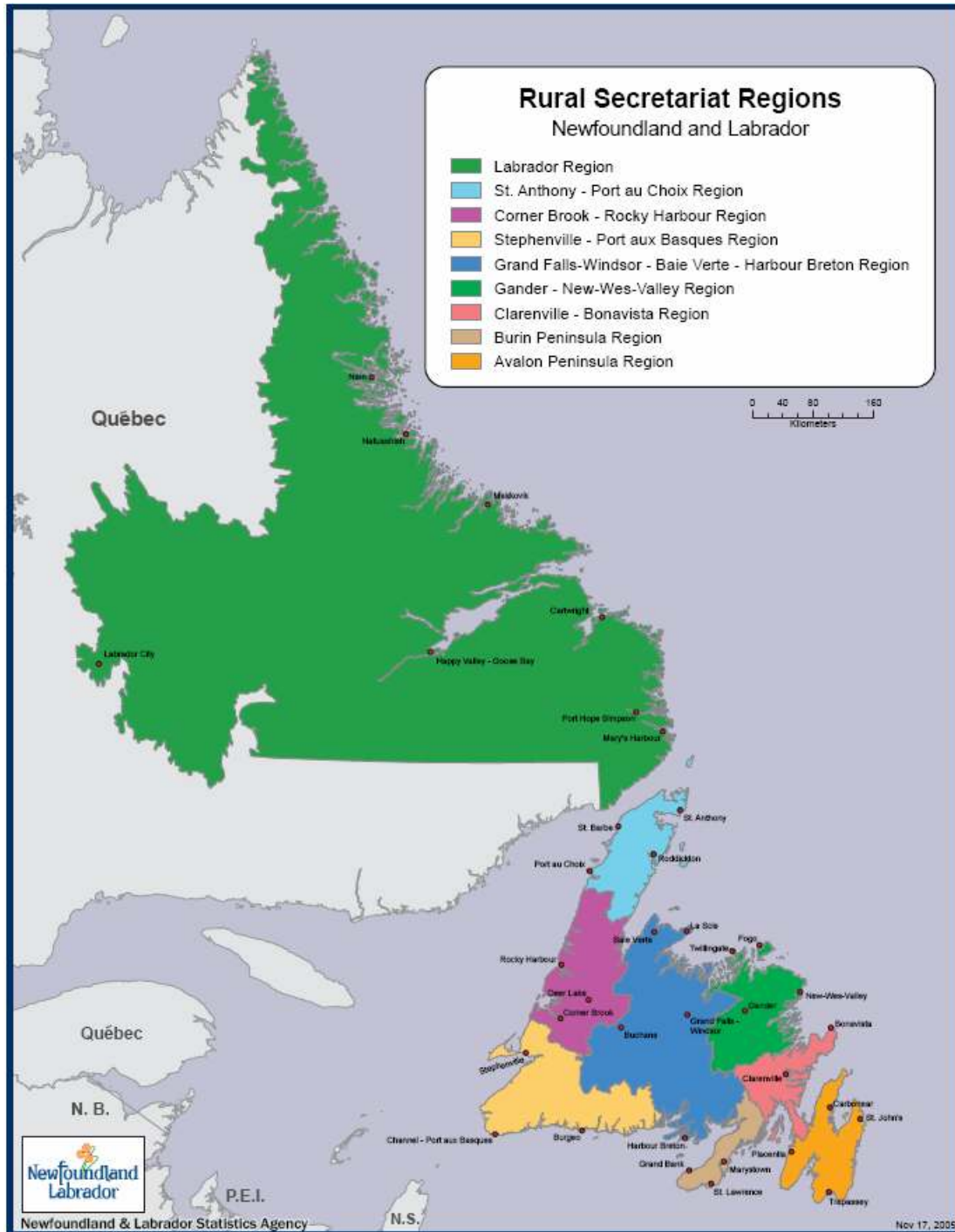
**Outcome Statement:** Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

**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





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### **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.





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