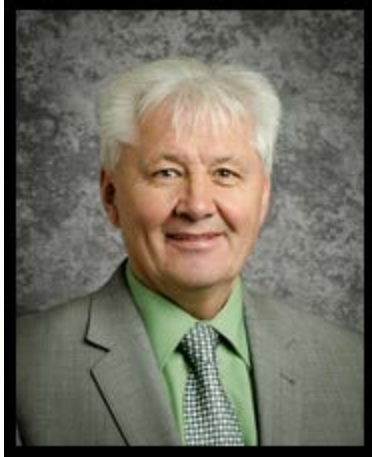


North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee

Annual Report 2015-16

Message from the Chair



I am pleased to present the 2015-16 Annual Report for the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee. The committee is mandated under the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*. It is comprised of representatives of the 15 municipalities from Witless Bay and Holyrood north to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana. I am pleased to be involved in the process as we work together towards developing a regional land use plan for government's consideration.

In July 2015, the committee awarded the contract to prepare the North East Avalon Regional Plan to Stantec. Since then, Stantec has moved forward with municipal stakeholder interviews in 2015-16.

As Chair of this committee, I can attest that this report has been prepared in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* requirements for a category three entity.

My signature below indicates that the committee accepts accountability for the preparation of this report and the results reported.

Sincerely,

Eddie Joyce
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Contents

- 1.0 Overview..... 1**
 - 1.1 Board Membership (March 31, 2016) 2
 - 1.2 Budget..... 3
 - 1.3 Contact Information 3
 - 1.4 Mandate..... 3
 - 1.5 Vision..... 4
 - 1.6 Mission..... 4
- 2.0 Report on Performance 4**
- 3.0 Opportunities and Challenges..... 7**

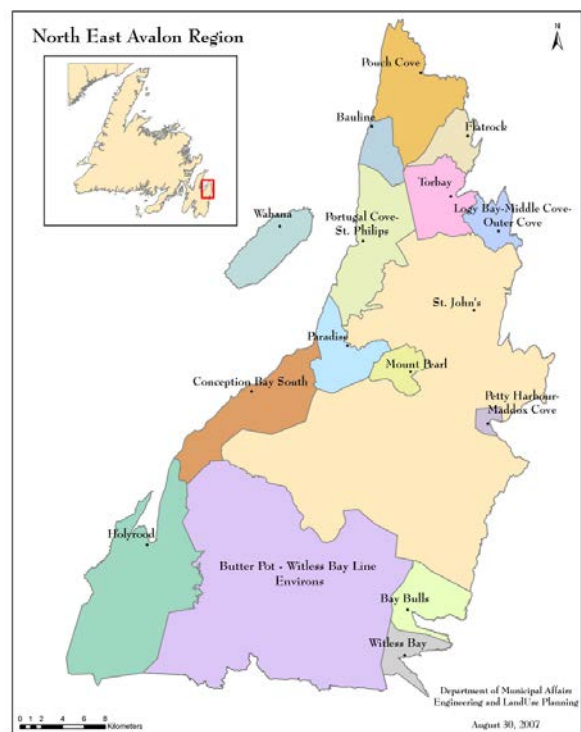
1.0 Overview

The principal function of the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee (Board) is to facilitate the development of the north east Avalon's regional land use plan for recommendation to government. As such, the Board oversees the work and preparation associated with development of a plan. When completed, the North East Avalon Regional Plan will be an overall planning and policy document guiding development, infrastructure and land use in the region.

The north east avalon region includes the area from, including the towns of, Witless Bay and Holyrood and all lands north to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana. The Board is established pursuant to section 9 of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*. It is comprised of mayors from each of the region's 15 municipalities and the Minister of Municipal Affairs as Chair. In addition, the committee is supported by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL), serving in the capacity of project management lead, and the Department of Municipal Affairs.

In accordance with the Board's terms of reference, the Board is responsible for the following:

- Approving the terms of reference/call for proposals to engage a consultant for preparation of a draft regional land use plan;
- Reviewing the recommendations of a review committee comprised of representatives of MNL, the department, and regional staff regarding the proposals and making a final recommendation to the minister with regard to the preferred consultant;
- Directing the work of the project management lead (MNL) and their project management consultant, with regards to needed engagement of individuals and organizations to learn about current issues within the regional planning area;



- Advising the planning consultant, through or in conjunction with MNL, on issues within the regional planning area;
- Providing available background material or studies to the planning consultant, through MNL;
- Reviewing and approving an appropriate public consultation process, based on recommendations from MNL, its project management consultant, the department and the planning consultant;
- Communicating progress on the regional land use plan development to municipal councils and provincial departments, as applicable to the individual committee member;
- Reviewing drafts of the regional land use plan and providing comments to the consultant through, or in conjunction with, MNL and their project management consultant;
- Recommending to the minister approval of the final version of the draft regional land use plan; and
- Working with the department to organize statutory public hearings on the draft regional land use plan, as required by the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000*.

1.1 Board Membership (March 31, 2016)

Minister Eddie Joyce (Chair)	Municipal Affairs
Mayor John Kennedy	Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove
Mayor Stephen Tessier	Town of Conception Bay South
Mayor Gary Gosine	Town of Wabana
Mayor Patrick O'Driscoll	Town of Bay Bulls
Mayor Sébastien Després	Town of Witless Bay
Mayor Randy Simms	City of Mount Pearl
Mayor Gary Goobie	Town of Holyrood
Mayor Dan Bobbett	Town of Paradise
Mayor Joedy Wall	Town of Pouch Cove
Mayor Dennis O'Keefe	City of St. John's
Mayor Moses Tucker	Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's
Mayor Christopher Dredge	Town of Bauline
Mayor Darrin Thorne	Town of Flatrock
Mayor Nat Hutchings	Town of Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove
Mayor Ralph Tapper	Town of Torbay

1.2 Budget

The Board does not have an office or staff, nor does it manage any funds or financial statements. Furthermore, members of the Board do not receive remuneration.

Prior to commencing the north east Avalon regional planning process, the province and the 15 municipalities agreed to share the cost of developing the plan on a 50/50 basis, including the costs of a project management firm and a consultant. The municipalities contribute on a per capita basis using the 2011 Census. MNL, in its capacity as project management lead, administers the funds on behalf of the plan partners. In 2015, \$238,000 was dispersed to the consultant for work completed.

1.3 Contact Information

The Board can be contacted as follows:

North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee
c/o Anna Myers, MCIP
Department of Municipal Affairs
Main Floor, West Block, Confederation Building
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St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
Tel: (709) 729-5302
annamyers@gov.nl.ca

1.4 Mandate

The mandate of the Board is to oversee the preparation of a regional land use plan for the north east Avalon regional planning area.

Whereas the north east Avalon has no designated regional planning authority, the minister is the regional authority for that area as per section 7(2) of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000 (URPA)*. As such, the Board derives its mandate from section 9 of the *URPA* which states:

9. (1) Where a regional authority for a regional planning area is the Minister,

*the preparation of a regional plan for that area shall include a procedure for consultation with the municipalities and other appropriate persons and organizations in the regional planning area;
and*

he or she may appoint persons to oversee the consultation procedure and development of the regional plan.

(2) Persons appointed under paragraph (1)(b) shall include representatives from each municipality and other persons and organizations that the Minister considers appropriate from the regional planning area.

To view the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000* in its entirety, please visit: <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/u08.htm>.

1.5 Vision

The vision of the Board is of communities in the north east Avalon region with viable, sustainable municipal services led by strong local governments.

1.6 Mission

Given the Board's limited mandate, the development of a mission with accompanying measures and indicators would be redundant to the objectives, which are already developed in the current activity plan.

2.0 Report on Performance

The development of a regional land use plan for the north east Avalon strengthens municipal capacity by building community partnerships through regional cooperation.

The north east Avalon has experienced growth and development in recent years and growth is expected to continue. Land use planning in the region is guided by the St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan (SJURRP) which was approved in 1976. Municipal plans for each of the 15 municipalities provide detailed local policies and regulations that must comply with regional land use policies established in the SJURRP.

All of the municipal plans have been updated since the SJURRP first came into effect. Many of the municipal plans have also had amendments completed to reflect changes in land use priorities and development patterns since they were first implemented. The SJURRP has been amended in excess of 40 times since it was implemented in order to provide consistency between the regional land use policies with those of individual municipalities. Developing a

new regional plan that better reflects longer term land use trends and development priorities will ensure a coherent and sustainable vision and land use strategy to better support the growth and development of the region.

In December 2014, the Board approved a terms of reference and issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to undertake various components of the development of a land use plan. The RFP did not result in a contract being awarded. The RFP was adjusted and re-issued in early 2015.

In July 2015, Stantec was awarded the contract to prepare the North East Avalon Regional Plan. Stantec proposes a five phased approach: Public Consultation; Background Issues & Analysis; Visioning; Alternative Scenarios and Draft and Register the NEAR Plan. A report is provided to the Board, for their review, as each phase is completed. Each approved report contributes to development of the final NEAR Plan. Over the course of the NEAR Plan review, a broad range of community engagement activities are taking place throughout the study area.

Given the Board's mandate is to develop a regional land use plan for recommendation to the minister; the Board has determined that a three-year goal is not applicable. The Board reports on the same annual objective for each year of its 2014-17 Activity Plan. However, the indicators will change in subsequent years as the work advances.

Objective 2015-16: By March 31, 2016, the committee (Board) will have overseen and facilitated the development of the north east Avalon's regional land use plan.

Measure: Has overseen and facilitated the development of the regional land use plan.

Indicator:

- The committee (Board) advised the consultant and project management lead of issues within the regional planning area through participation in preparation of the public engagement strategy, municipal workshops and working sessions.

This indicator was partially met. While the consultant's schedule was delayed due to the need to re-issue the RFP and the provincial election the consultant did meet with municipalities on an individual basis in lieu of a workshop. In addition, prior to re-engaging as a Board, the minister worked to obtain the commitment, from each municipality involved in this process, that this endeavor is a priority. The minister awaits

a response from all communities. The work of the consultant is on hold pending a meeting of the Board.

- Review and select planning alternatives as presented by the consultant.

This indicator was not met. In 2015-16, the consultant neared completion of phase one (public consultation) and two (background issues and analysis) of the above mentioned five phased approach. Completion of these and additional phases is pending consultations with the Board. “Review and select planning alternatives” is phase four.

- Review and approve the consultant’s deliverables at each of the five phases of the project.

This indicator was not met. Review will be completed upon each phase of the project.

Discussion of Results:

Planned activities as per the consultants work plan were postponed as a result of the provincial election and have yet to be rescheduled. The consultant held stakeholder meetings and worked on the background report however further work by the consultant is pending a meeting of the Board and the media launch. The minister is awaiting a commitment from each municipality involved in this process, that this endeavor is a priority.

Objective 2016-17: By March 31, 2017, the committee (Board) will have overseen and facilitated the development of the north east Avalon’s regional land use plan.

Measure: Has overseen and facilitated the development of the regional land use plan.

Indicator:

- Review and select planning alternatives as presented by the consultant.
- Review and approve the consultant’s deliverables at each of the five phases of the project.

3.0 Opportunities and Challenges

4.1 Opportunities:

The north east Avalon region has a population of over 200,000 people; it is the most densely populated area in the province. It is an area that has experienced significant growth of the past decade and this growth is expected to continue. Consistency in land use and development policies will enhance the region's ability to transition during times of population change.

The north east Avalon region is a provincial service centre. Economic opportunities in other areas of the province such as mining, oil development and tourism both rely on and benefit the north east Avalon region. Consistency in land use and development policies will reduce regulatory requirements for businesses wishing to set up or expand across municipal borders thereby encouraging continued economic development for all community partners.

4.2 Challenge:

While the north east Avalon has a history of cooperative service sharing arrangements, the Board remains cognizant of each resident's commitment to place and community. The challenge is to preserve the individual identities of the member communities and respect community priorities while developing an overarching plan for the region.