

**North East Avalon Regional Plan
Oversight Committee
Annual Report 2017-18**

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present the 2017-18 Annual Report for the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee. The Committee is mandated under the **Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000** and is typically comprised of representatives of the 15 municipalities from Witless Bay and Holyrood north to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana. The Committee operates in consideration of the strategic directions of Government, in particular, supporting sustainable municipalities, communities and regions through a healthy environment and strong local governments. The Committee's objective is to support the collaborative process towards developing a North East Avalon regional land use plan for Government's consideration.

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Parsons', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ANDREWS PARSONS Q.C.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment

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Overview

The principal function of the North East Avalon Regional Plan Oversight Committee (the “Committee”) is to facilitate the development of the North East Avalon’s Regional Land Use Plan (the “Plan”) for recommendation to government. As such, the Committee oversees the work and preparation associated with development of a plan. When completed, the North East Avalon Regional (“NEAR”) Plan will be an overarching planning and policy document intended to guide development, infrastructure and land use within the region.

The North East Avalon region includes the areas from Witless Bay and Holyrood to all lands north to Cape St. Francis, including Wabana. The Committee 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 and Environment as the Chair. In addition, the committee is supported by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (“MNL”), serving in the capacity of project management lead, and technical advice/support from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment.

As committee membership changed pursuant to the 2017 municipal election, the new members will re-convene in 2018-19.

Budget and Expenditures

The Committee does not have an office or staff, nor does it manage any funds or financial statements. Furthermore, members of the Committee 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 Statistics Canada Census. MNL, in its capacity as project management lead, administers the funds on behalf of the plan partners.

Report on Performance

The North East Avalon has experienced significant 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 (the “SJURRP”) which was approved by Cabinet in 1976. Municipal plans for each of the 15 area municipalities provide detailed local policies and regulations that must comply with regional land use policies established in the SJURRP.

In recent years, a number of plans have been updated and amended, while others remain unchanged.

As such, the Committee recognizes that the resulting policies and strategies of the existing SJURRP and associated municipal plans may be inconsistent with each other. Updating the regional plan, and municipal plans as necessary, will help ensure a consistent and sustainable land use strategy in regards to the growth and development of the region.

A new regional land use plan is required to address the following issues:

- Municipal Services;
- Transportation;
- Environment;
- Diverse Development;
- Plan Governance;
- Economy; and
- Collaboration.

The development of a regional land use plan for the North East Avalon supports strategic directions related to sustainable communities, and is consistent with the Way Forward’s focus on a stronger economic foundation.

The Committee’s efforts in developing a regional land use plan for recommendation to the Minister will benefit local governments, the Provincial Government and residents of the region. Given the Committee’s specific mandate is to develop a regional land use plan for recommendation to the Minister, the Committee determined that a three year goal was not applicable. The Committee reports on the same annual objective for each year of its Activity Plan (2017-2020)

2017-18 Objective:

By March 31, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the committee will have facilitated the development of the land use plan for the North East Avalon Region.

Planned Indicator	Actual Progress
Worked with the consultants in the collection and consideration of public input and feedback on the Regional plan, through forums, symposia, hearings, online surveys, focus group discussions, or other consultation methods as appropriate.	<p>The consultants hired by the Committee, Stantec and Waterwerks, held a multimedia awareness campaign throughout May 2017 and held two in-person consultation sessions, one in Holyrood and one in Paradise.</p> <p>Re-engagement of the new membership of the Committee is required due to a turnover in municipal representatives as a result of</p>

	municipal elections in fall 2017. Work on the draft plan will continue in 2018-19.
Worked with the consultants and stakeholders in overseeing the preparation of a comprehensive draft of the North East Avalon Regional Plan (NEAR Plan).	<p>The Committee met once during the reporting period- in April 2017. The committee reviewed draft elements of the plan and gave input on direction for public consultation and final structure of the plan.</p> <p>Following public consultations in May 2017, the Consultants worked with Municipalities NL in June to prepare a revised table of contents for the final report and a revised schedule for review by the committee.</p> <p>This work will be reviewed in the next meeting of the committee in 2018-19</p>

Discussion of Results:

The Committee met once in the reporting period to discuss the draft elements of the plan and to give input on direction for public consultation.

The consultants hired by the Committee conducted a multimedia awareness campaign and two in-person consultation sessions in May 2017. The campaign raised awareness about the NEAR plan process.

Following the September 2017 municipal elections, several members of the Committee no longer serve on municipal council; and thus, are no longer able to sit on the Committee. The committee will reconvene in 2018-19 to resume its work.

Opportunities and Challenges

The NEAR 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 over 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.

While the North East Avalon has a history of cooperative service sharing arrangements, it is important that the Committee 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 consistent Plan for the region.