

# **St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority**

Annual Performance Report

April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018



## Chairperson's Message

The Honourable Gerry Byrne  
Department of Fisheries and Land Resources  
Petten Building  
30 Strawberry Marsh Road  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Byrne:

In accordance with the provisions of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for Category 3 public bodies, I am pleased to submit the Annual Performance Report for the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority (the Authority) for the period April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

The Authority was successful in fulfilling its objective for the reporting period. The commitments of Government related to the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (FLR), including those outlined in **The Way Forward**, have been considered in the preparation of this report. More specifically, the work undertaken will support Government in reaching the target to increase Newfoundland and Labrador's food self-sufficiency from its current 10 per cent to at least 20 per cent by 2022.

My signature below is on behalf of the Authority and indicative of the Authority's accountability for the results reported on its activities for 2017-18.

Respectfully submitted,



**Coolene Brake**  
Acting Chairperson

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## Overview

Section 3 of the **St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area Regulations** (the Regulations) under the **Lands Act** provides for the appointment of a St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority (the Authority). Members of the Authority are appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Land Resources. The Authority must have at least five people including a Chairperson and a Secretary. During the reporting period, the Authority was made up of staff from the Department of Fisheries and Land Resources (FLR), as well as staff from other resource departments as per the regulation.

The members of the Authority as March 31, 2018 were as follows:

Name		Region	Organization
Coolene Brake	Acting Chairperson	Western	Manager of Agricultural Land, Land Management Division, FLR
John Del Rizzo	Secretary	Avalon	Land Management Officer, Land Management Division, FLR
Robert Locke	Member	Avalon	Manager of Operations and Environmental Protection, Service NL
Gerry Wicks	Member	Avalon	Industry Development Officer (responsible for St. John's Area), Production and Research Division, FLR
Vacant	Member	Vacant	Planner, Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment
Vacant	Member	Avalon	FLR

All members are employees of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and receive no additional remuneration for their involvement in the Authority. There is no budget allocation specific to the duties of the Authority.

The Authority received extensive operational support from FLR. Employees of FLR performed day-to-day administrative functions, and consulted other staff regarding applications where necessary. Budgetary support for operations was provided through FLR.

For more detail on the regulations, please refer to the House of Assembly website at: <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc961079.htm>.

This report is available in alternate formats. For further information contact: Land Management Specialist, St. John's, Telephone: 709-729-6599

## Mandate:

The St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority has a mandate to:

(a) Review applications to carry out development on land within the St. John's Urban

Region Agriculture Development Area;

(b) Inform municipalities of decisions made;

(c) Monitor activities within the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area; and

(d) Ensure awareness of the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area and associated regulations.

For more detail on the Regulations, please refer to the House of Assembly web site at:

<http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/regulations/rc961079.htm>.

## Highlights and Partnerships

The Authority reviews development applications from municipalities within the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area (St. John's ADA) to ensure they conform with the Regulations. The Authority welcomes consultation with municipalities. In December of 2017, the Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove, as part of their municipal planning review, approached the Authority for input as to how to preserve the agricultural lands within the town. The Town Council was concerned that increased residential and commercial development threatening the rural quality of the town, which they wished to preserve. The Town Council recognizes the role of agriculture in the area and wishes to maintain it. Where the Authority is involved directly with municipalities in evaluating development applications, the Authority encourages and promotes dialogue between itself and municipal planning departments within the St. John's ADA.

## Report on Performance

The Authority contributes to the **The Way Forward's** commitment to increase Newfoundland and Labrador's food self-sufficiency from its current 10 per cent to at least 20 per cent by 2022. During the 2017-18 reporting year this was done through the protection of agricultural land and farm activities within the St. John's ADA in the review of applications for development activities and by regulating development to ensure it conforms to the **St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area Regulations**.

Applications are received from the municipalities and reviewed by the secretary of the Authority. Depending on the type of development being reviewed, a site visit may be required or additional information sought from the applicant and an agricultural impact assessment to be carried out. Applications are then reviewed by the Authority and the decisions are conveyed to the respective municipalities within 30 days of initial receipt, as per Section 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 of the Regulations.

The objective and indicators are derived from the 2017-20 Activity Plan of the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority. The 2017-20 Activity Plan is available on line at:

[http://www.faa.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/SJLDAA\\_2017\\_20\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.faa.gov.nl.ca/publications/pdf/SJLDAA_2017_20_Plan.pdf)

As the focus of the Authority will remain the same for the entire plan, the Authority will report on the same objective and indicators in all three years.

### **Objective:**

By March 31, 2018, the St. John's Land Development Advisory Authority will have worked to ensure development activities in the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area are compliant with the Act and Regulations, thus supporting ongoing, sustainable agricultural development in the area.

### **Indicators:**

- Reviewed all applications and rendered decisions;
  - In 2017-18, the Authority met on nine occasions to review 26 applications for agricultural and non-agricultural development within the boundaries of the St. John's ADA. Of the 26 applications received and processed, 19 were approved, four were refused and three were deferred. Five decisions of the Authority were heard by the St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Appeal Board. These appeals were heard in 2017-18.
  - The applications were reviewed by a quorum of the Authority. Of the 26 applications that were reviewed eight were for accessory buildings (garage/shed); four for residence; three for commercial-related developments, two were tele-communications related and nine were agriculture related.
- Periodically met with municipalities and land owners to provide education and awareness on the role of the Authority;
  - In December of 2017, the Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove approached the Authority for input as to how to preserve the agricultural lands within the town.
  - Regular communication with landowners within the St. John's ADA regarding the development requirements within the area were completed, in the form of personal meetings and written correspondence.
- Maintained records of decisions;
  - The Secretary of the Authority maintained and updated a registry of all applications, including decisions. Within 30 days of a decision, the Secretary forwarded the decisions of the Authority to the applicable Municipality which is responsible for informing applicants of its decision including an explanation of the Authority's decision pursuant to the Regulations.

- Communicated decisions to municipalities in a timely manner;
  - All decision letters sent to municipalities were within 30 days of initial receipt. However, in the case where the Authority requests additional information from the applicant an additional 30 days is allowed for a response.
- Monitored development activities for compliance with regulations and reported to municipal jurisdiction any non-compliance where applicable.
  - Staff members of FLR regularly perform field work within the St. John's ADA and actively monitor development activity to ensure compliance with respect to the regulations during these routine field visits. Ten monitoring inspections were performed within the St. John's ADA. There were no instances of unapproved commercial or residential development impacting agricultural lands. Municipalities also notify the Authority if they determine that the development is not conforming to their development regulations.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

Commercial and residential expansion in the North East Avalon has often resulted in the loss of viable agricultural lands. The challenges facing the Authority are in preserving agricultural integrity of the St. John's ADA. Much of the land in the St. John's agricultural area is privately owned. While this land may have been used for farming in the past, the current owners may not have the ability or will to develop it for agriculture.

There are opportunities to work with municipalities to increase awareness and promotion of agricultural development within their boundaries to a new generation of farmers.

## **Financial Information**

Audited financial statements are not required as the Authority was budgeted through FLR. There are no per diems, travel or other costs associated with the administration of the Authority.