

Aquaforte – Ferryland – Cape Broyle Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

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PREFACE

Municipal development and sustainability requires leaders willing to take on new work and guide their towns into the future; it requires an active council of interested and knowledgeable people willing to take on new ideas and innovative practices; it requires engaged citizens willing to support town initiatives through volunteer work and financial support through taxes and fees.

Towns all over the world are faced with these three challenges: how to grow leaders; how best to use local activists; how to engage the public. There are no easy answers, no formulas and no directions to achieve these. An Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) is just another plan. If actively implemented, evaluated, and changed; as a living document it adjusts to changing times.

The "united" part of "united we stand, divided we fall" now has a new, wider meaning; it is not just the townspeople of any single town that need to stand together but groups of townspeople from many towns sharing common geography, financial resources, culture, history, social structures, environments, and governance. That is the present and future.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In April 2009 the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador outlined requirements for municipalities in completing ICSPs, one option of which included a collaborative approach among three or more municipalities. Thirteen municipalities in the Irish Loop region agreed, through four separate management contracts with the Irish Loop Development Board signed in the summer of 2009, to collaborate in the preparation of four regional Integrated Community Sustainability Plans.

The ICSP, which sets out sustainable development goals, is a requirement of the Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador governments for the continuation of federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) rebates to municipalities. The ICSP program is national in scope.

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The four collaborative groups in the Irish Loop are made up of neighbouring towns comprising distinct sub-regions within the larger region. The Towns of Aquaforte, Ferryland and Cape Broyle formed one of these collaborative groups.

2.0 ICSP BACKGROUND

2.1 Provincial ICSP Framework

The ICSP initiative in Newfoundland and Labrador was announced and supported by the Department of Municipal Affairs in April 2009. In part, the Press Release describes the scope of an ICSP:

"The ICSP is meant to be a strategic planning document that is constantly evolving and updated as necessary," said the Honourable Dianne Whalen, Minister of Municipal Affairs. "By following the steps outlined in the new framework, municipalities should be able to develop efficient and effective plans. We would also encourage more municipalities to consider how they may work together as they think about strategies to strengthen their communities."

The \$82 million Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues was announced in August 2006. Municipalities and Inuit Community Governments in the province can use this funding towards environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure projects, such as water, wastewater management, solid waste management, public transit, community energy systems, and roads and bridges. Eligible recipients who have signed the Gas Tax Agreement are expected to develop an ICSP that sets out their environmental, social, cultural, governance and economic objectives over a five-year time frame.

The Gas Tax website describes eligible funding uses as Capacity Building including:

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“Collaboration: building partnerships and strategic alliances; participation; and consultation and outreach” and “Integration: planning, policy development and implementation This can include: Integrated sustainability planning”

2.2 Irish Loop ICSP Initiative

Consistent with the Irish Loop Development Board’s core functions in support of planning and partnership with local governments, in March 2009 the Board presented municipal partners with the prospect of supports in ICSP development through the Irish Loop Integrated Community Sustainability Plan Initiative (see Appendix A). Core Function 2 of the Irish Loop Development Board states:

“Develop a strong partnership with municipalities in the zone that incorporates the strategies and priorities of municipalities in the economic planning process.”

In relation to planning and capacity, Core Function 4 of the Irish Loop Development Board states:

“Undertake capacity building and provide support to stakeholders to strengthen the economic environment of the zone.”

Building on the Board’s strong partnerships with the Southern Shore Joint Council (SSJC) and the St. Mary’s Bay Joint Council (SMBJC) reflected within ongoing agreements between the Board and local partners, the Irish Loop ICSP Initiative afforded municipalities in Zone 20 an attractive opportunity to address capacity in emerging ICSP requirements through collaboration and partnership at the local and regional level. As a consequence, all fifteen incorporated municipalities in the Irish Loop undertook collaborative ICSPs with their neighbours while thirteen of the fifteen contracted directly with the Irish Loop Development Board for project management

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services in support of their collaborative ICSPs. The Board's efforts proved invaluable in defining initial ICSP requirements, facilitating collaborative ICSP agreements and cost-sharing arrangements and in identifying external supports and ICSP methodologies.

3.0 ICSP METHODOLOGY

3.1 Project Management

This ICSP results from following a planning process. A private consultant was contracted by the Irish Loop Development Board, acting as project manager for four regional ICSP groups including the Towns of Aquaforte, Ferryland and Cape Broyle as one collaborative ICSP.

3.2 ICSP Committee Engagement

Communities involved in this ICSP established an oversight committee comprising councillors and staff from each municipality consistent with the Collaboration Agreement signed by each participating municipality (see Appendix B). A planning document was prepared and presented to ICSP committees. A SWOT analysis was done to determine how they saw their role and responsibilities in sustainable development.

The increasing emphasis on regional development was admitted universally as was the recognition that sustainability planning is being imposed on towns as part of provincial government funding rules. Plan elements grew from an analysis of sustainability challenges as identified by the four regional ICSP committees and public consultations.

3.3 Research and Comparative Analysis

The contractor researched sustainability planning; municipal sustainability issues and related local government systems. Newfoundland's municipal system is young and

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basic when compared to other Canadian provinces. Irish Loop towns were compared to national and provincial small town data. It showed small towns across Canada share similar blessings and burdens but, generally, towns in other provinces collect and spend more per capita than Newfoundland towns. They also have greater responsibilities in regional affairs, especially regional planning. Many Canadian towns operate public transit and public housing programs, many provide police services and in some provinces townspeople pay municipal taxes to health boards, school boards, and county-type governments.

Interviews were conducted with the Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs) for the two provincial ridings in the Irish Loop and directors and leaders of municipal agencies, government departments, and academic groups. The interviews showed overwhelming support for the regional ICSP approach and demonstrated the wealth of information, knowledge, and skills available to towns wishing to develop.

3.4 ICSP Web Presence, Communications and Public Engagement/Input

At the outset, input was invited on the ICSP process through the establishment of an ICSP web presence at <http://icsp.ildb.ca>. All ICSP-related resources and documents are available at this location. In addition, a public consultation on the draft ICSP statement of principles and plan was held on February 9, 2010 at the Regional Arts Center in Ferryland. Individual councils were urged to review the draft plans within the monthly public meetings affording further opportunity for review and public engagement.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 Findings of the ICSP Committee facilitated meeting

The following points arose from an ICSP Committee Focus Group held on September 3,

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2009 at the Town Office in Ferryland.

- Regional integration.
- Need for continuity across municipal election and new councillor orientation.
- Agreement regional processes cannot be avoided.
- Regional government structures needed for waste management and emergency services to start.
- Recognition that equable taxation is desirable.

4.2 SWOT

- Strengths: sharing with unincorporated community, strong church ties, willingness to collaborate
- Weaknesses: aging population, divided by unincorporated community, different taxation styles
- Opportunities: this process
- Threats: ministerial decree

4.3 Shared visions of the future

Four common visions of future municipal operations were collected.

- Shared accounting services (some towns do already share accounting services)
- Shared municipal payment portal
- Shared municipal investment plan
- Regional development plans

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4.4 Self-administered sustainability toolkit results

Eleven of the 13 Irish Loop towns involved in collaborative ICSP processes with the Irish Loop Development Board completed the Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL) sustainability self- assessment toolkit in 2008-2009. Towns put forward "sustainability indicators important to your municipality" and "municipal and community assets that can be drawn upon to enhance sustainability". In analysing these results, it was felt that an aggregated result for all respondents in the region would be of most benefit in identifying broad themes as there was little difference in terms of responses overall and when taken on a sub-regional basis individual responses from communities would have to be suppressed as not all communities within sub-regions completed the assessment. These responses were then re-ordered and reduced to common values. Indicators are weaknesses and assets are strengths in a SWOT style analysis.

Table 4.1 Indicators and Assets

| INDICATORS | ASSETS |
|--|---------------------------------|
| administration complexities | Archaeology |
| Beautification | Avalon wilderness reserve |
| Businesses | Business |
| cellular coverage desperately required | community wharf |
| Communications | fire department |
| cooperation but not amalgamation | fiscal management |
| declining fishery | good council |
| declining population | good public engagement |
| Devolution | great harbour |
| economic development | hardware store |
| go green | high speed Internet |
| History | History |
| Infrastructure | history - graves being restored |
| low MOG | Hospitality |
| low tax base | low tax rate |
| medical facilities | marine centre |

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| INDICATORS | ASSETS |
|--|--|
| no staff | natural environment |
| no youth population | natural resources |
| Outmigration | nursing home |
| pay councils (incentive for participation) | plant expanding |
| Planning | potential offshore oil repair facility |
| provincial support | proximity to St. John's |
| Recreation | recreational facilities |
| regional services | recreational fishery |
| Seniors | ship wrecks |
| social capital | Tourism |
| support local volunteer organizations | water system |
| tourism and retirement | wind farm |
| training opportunities | |

4.5 Messages of Inspiration

Interviews were conducted with municipal agency leaders, government officials, and MHAs. A final question asked, “What words of encouragement or inspiration would you like to say to the 23 collaborative ICSP groups across Newfoundland and Labrador?” Their answers are illustrative of great support for regionalization from government and agencies: whether this can be capitalized for local government remains to be seen. At the same time the many programs and supports offered through Municipal Affairs, MNL and other agencies are the best tools now available. They are only valuable if they are used.

- ICSP process is a great opportunity to build momentum on regional initiatives
- use Gas Tax money to lever more funds to concentrate on capacity building, planning and regional cooperation
- a turning point in Newfoundland and Labrador municipal governance so take full advantage while you can
- these efforts are the forerunners, next round of development will be even

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more advanced

- towns not on board this time they will regret it later
- levels of cooperation and collaboration are bigger than anticipated and have greater implications than anticipated by government's mind set
- congratulations to towns involved
- group effort is the only way to do an ICSP because towns are part of their region and sustainability has to be considered as part of a region
- there are lots of supports and assistance available for towns doing ICS plans
- congratulations and good luck
- you have the capacity to change things if you work hard and push hard
- your differences are very minor
- that so many towns have chosen a collaborative approach to sustainability is impressive
- a regional approach can have significant impact in individual participating towns
- you can make more progress together than you can separately
- look for collaborative advantages wherever you can
- the process takes time, be patient and positive when developing relationships
- putting aside small town rivalries the benefits of regionalism are worthwhile
- regionalism can increase town survival and improve quality of life

5.0 IRISH LOOP MUNICIPAL HISTORY (General)

Taken again on the aggregate, the thirteen (13) towns participating in the Irish Loop ICSP Initiative have an average incorporated period of 41.2 years. The newest municipality, Cape Broyle, dates from 1990 while the oldest two, St. Shott's and

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Portugal Cove South, date from 1963. Six more municipalities were incorporated in the 1960's and the remainder by 1972. Bay Bulls and Witless Bay were incorporated in the 1980's. There are seven communities organized in five Local Service Districts (Mobile, Tor's Cove, Burnt Cove/St Michaels/Bauline East, Calvert, Biscay Bay) and some unorganized neighbourhoods.

The four collaborative ICSP groups have a long history of good government and seven communities are already incorporated within in three of the 13 participating municipalities. Nominations for municipal elections have slowed in recent years and this is seen as a public engagement issue (aged population, four year term makes it difficult to commit).

People lived along the Southern Shore and St. Mary's Bay since the 1700's but permanent settlement giving rise to today's geographical situation dates effectively from 1850; a century and a half ago. A century ago there was a railroad, replaced by a road 70 years ago. St. Mary's Bay was an international fishing centre for 300 years. The Irish Loop has always been open to in-migrants; new people with new ideas often bring change.

Toward the end of the 20th century, regionalization of services in the region became evident with school consolidations being undertaken and church parishes being combined. As communities and churches lost people, parishes regionalized (nine reduced to five). Parish halls and wooden schools are now community halls and commercial rental spaces. Social capital and social sustainability live in strong church-community linkages.

In the 1960's resettlement was on everyone's mind and local incorporation was seen as the best way to preserve small places; poll taxes (fees) were preferred over property taxes (only 4 of 13 participating towns use ad valorem tax); local development was based on two natural conditions, lots of fish and progressive times. Average municipal

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fees and poll taxes are about the same as fees charged by Local Service District Committees, showing the cost of services is similar across the region.

6.0 Aquaforte – Ferryland – Cape Broyle Regional Profile

The region consists of two towns of near equal, average size and one of the smallest towns in Newfoundland and Labrador. Together their combined population dropped from 1308 to 1177 between 2001 and 2006, a drop of about 10%. The group contains 584 private dwellings with 461 (78%) occupied by their usual residents and has a geographic footprint of 30 square kilometres. Calvert, a Local Service District, and undeveloped land north of Calvert, divide Ferryland from Cape Broyle.

The towns share an interesting history and strong religious and family connections. Tourism infrastructure and services are well-developed. Manufacturing and processing bolster the regional economy. Built heritage and archaeological potentials are becoming integrated in the region, centred on the Colony of Avalon and a well-developed folk arts presence.

Development challenges include an ageing population, dwindling work forces; downturns in resource-based employment; inadequate transportation infrastructure; and a shrinking tax base. The median age is 47 with nearly 70% of residents between 15 and 65. The Towns of Ferryland and Cape Broyle have up to date municipal plans.

6.1 Aquaforte Profile

The name Aquaforte on a map from 1519 referred to the area R.da aguea, meaning strong or fast water. This may have referred to a local waterfall that empties into the harbour. Later, K.da aguea evolved into Agoforta and eventually was named Aquaforte.

During 1675 to 1715 Aquaforte supported a small seasonal fishery with ships from the English ports of Bideford and Barnstable which visited on a regular basis. By 1776 local

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Justice of the Peace, Robert Carter applied to England for a small tract of land and became the first farmer in the community. By the late 1700's seasonal fishing crews were visiting the area, however, it wasn't until the early 1800s that permanent settlement occurred when English fishermen began to stay year round.

In 1833 the first police constable in the area was appointed. In 1836 the population of Aquaforte grew to more than 125 residents and by 1842 three schools were operating. In 1902 Anders Ellefsen of Noweigia made an application to build a factory to process whales. From the 1920s to 1930s the local businessmen built ice houses or insulated warehouses to store ice to sell to passing schooners. In 1972 Aquaforte was incorporated as a community.

6.2 Ferryland Profile

Founded by Lord Baltimore in 1621, Ferryland is not only one of the most historic communities in Newfoundland, but in all of North America. It would be difficult to find a place with more natural tourist appeal and historic significance. Here too, was the birthplace of religious tolerance and freedom of worship in the New World. Ferryland was incorporated in 1971.

Considered to be the government service center of the Southern Shore, Ferryland has numerous businesses and organizations including medial and police facilities. It also is the anchor for tourism with the Colony of Avalon Archaeology Dig Site/Interpretation Centre. Ferryland has the greatest potential to develop as a major tourism destination, and plans to move forward with leadership, commitment and appropriate development.

6.3 Cape Broyle Profile

Cape Broyle, located on the Southern Shore along Route 10, is believed to have taken its name from the Portuguese word brolle, meaning to roar, referring to a ledge of sunken rock jutting out from the cape and causing white water to form at the bay's entrance. Although earlier attempts to form a colony began in 1618, the community got its start in the 1780s when settlers began to arrive from Ireland. By the mid 1800s the population had grown to over 500.

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Traditionally the inshore fishery was the major employer, but in more recent years the economy has diversified to include eco-tourism and a small crab fishery. Much of the focus has now shifted from fishing to manufacturing. The town also has a fish processing plant, a small engine repair shop, a hardware store, a construction company, an ecotourism operation, bed and breakfasts, grocery stores, restaurants/lounges, garages, and several beauty salons.

Table 6.1 Collaborative Region Businesses

| for profit | | | | not for profit | | | |
|--|-------|---------|------------|--|--------|--------|-------------|
| Retail | Heavy | Service | Government | Recreation | Church | Social | Development |
| 18 | 7 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 3 |
| <p>Group characteristics – for profit <i>Retail:</i> service stations, garages, building centers, markets, retail, pharmacies; goods including produced crafts or art</p> <p><i>Heavy:</i> transportation (not fish), construction, contracting (not building centers), food products, aquaculture, manufacturing (not for retail)</p> <p><i>Service:</i> tourist driven markets, restaurants, B&B's and rentals, personal services, local trade (not craft/gift stores)</p> <p><i>Government:</i> Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador offices and service centers; Post Office</p> | | | | <p>Group characteristics – not for profit <i>Recreation:</i> develops and implements recreation programs; operates facilities; organizes social events and activities</p> <p><i>Church:</i> associated by denomination; promotes religious-based social responsibility and values</p> <p><i>Social:</i> subsets with common interests and universal goals; secular groups; harbour and fishery committees</p> <p><i>Development:</i> NGO's and development agencies; membership driven associations; chamber of commerce</p> | | | |

Table 6.2 Collaborative Region municipal expenditures by category as % of total spending

| | Canada % total spending 2001 | AFCB % 2006 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| General administration | 11.0 | 32.0 |
| Emergency services | 15.9 | 6.0 |
| Transportation (Roads) | 19.8 | 17.0 |
| Health* | 2.0 | 10.2 |
| Environment* | 14.0 | |

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| | | |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Resource conservation* | 2.0 | |
| Social services | 12.6 | |
| Education/training | 0.4 | |
| Housing | 2.6 | |
| Regional planning** | 2.2 | 2.7 |
| Debt charges*** | 5.9 | 32.4 |
| Other | 0.5 | |

* In IL towns *Health* is solid waste management; adding *Health, Environmental protection* and *Resource conservation* (arguably acceptable) gives a national towns figure of 18%.

Transportation in IL is local roads but in Canada often includes public transit.

If *General administration* is added with *Social services, Education and training, and Housing*, for example, then *General administration* for IL towns gets closer to the national average, however, no IL towns are involved in these expenditures.

The national number for *Emergency* often includes policing which is not part of IL towns' responsibility; as well, some Canadian towns collect taxes for regional health and or school boards.

Table 6.3 Collaborative Region municipal revenues by category

| Revenues | National % 2001 | AFCB % 2006 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <i>Own source</i> | | |
| Property tax/poll tax | 52.2 | 30.6 |
| Water tax | | 7.5 |
| Business tax | | 23.0 |
| Investment income* | 4.9 | |
| Other* | 1.6 | 9.4 |
| Total own-source revenue | 83.0 | 71.1 |
| <i>Grants</i> | | |
| Unconditional grants | | |
| Conditional grants | | |
| Provincial MOG | | 10.6 |
| Provincial debt relief | | 18.5 |
| Total grants | 17.0 | 29.1 |

Table 6.4 Collaborative Regional municipal expenditures per capita*

| Group | NL per capita spending 2001 \$ | Group population | Spending to meet average \$ | Spending from budget \$ | Group per capita spending 2006 \$ | % over (+) or under (-) NL amount |
|-------|---|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|------|--------|------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| AFCB | 767.00 | 1177 | 902,759 | 481,000 | 410.00 | -46.70% |
|------|--------|------|---------|---------|--------|---------|

*This table indicates these towns are spending at levels below that of their provincial counterparts.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Sustainability Background

The concept of sustainable development was popularized in 1987 with the publication of the “Brundtland Report” – the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. It highlighted sustainable development that would “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Five years later, in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) met in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the planet’s dwindling resources in the face of unrestrained economic growth and the failure of humankind to achieve equitable development. The “Earth Summit”, as the UNCED came to be known, resulted in countries agreeing to the Rio Declaration setting out 27 principles for achieving sustainable development and complemented by Agenda 21, a guiding document for sustainable development.

It has generally been accepted that achieving sustainable development will require balancing environmental, societal, and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. A number of ideals and principles underlying sustainability have been identified. These include intergenerational equity, gender equity, just and peaceable societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation.

Agenda 21 identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted four areas of action for education:

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- Improve the quality of basic education;
- Reorient existing education program to address sustainable development;
- Develop public awareness and understanding; and
- Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.

Despite much effort in these and other areas, reports prepared by countries for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002, the ten-year review of Agenda 21, revealed that the goals laid out in Rio were still a long way from becoming reality. There was clearly a need to rethink education. Education for Sustainable Development paves the way for this “rethinking”.

7.2 Core characteristics of ESD

If ESD is to be an effective tool for engaging people in negotiating a sustainable future, making decisions and acting on them, it must first address the way we think about sustainable development and about education in general. Essential to ESD are the following skills (Adapted from Tilbury, D. and Wortman, D. (2004), Engaging People in Sustainability):

- Envisioning – being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that if we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there.
- Critical thinking and reflection – learning to question current belief systems and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspective and opinions.
- Systemic thinking – acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies.
- Building partnerships – promoting dialogue and negotiation, collaboration.
- Participation in decision-making – empowering people.

These skills should be learned and applied according to the cultural contexts of different

groups and stakeholders.

7.3 Civic Education and Citizenship

At the heart of civic education is the concept that we must understand what it means to be a citizen. One definition explains that civics refers to education in civic obligations and rights. Another defines civics as "the branch of political science that deals with civic affairs and the rights and duties of citizens." Yet another states that civics is "the study of local government and of the rights and duties of citizenship."

What these definitions share are the ideas that citizenship gives us access to rights and freedoms and, at the same time, it demands we fulfill certain duties and obligations. The importance of civic education is that without a populace informed about their civic duties, the rights and freedoms promised by our constitutional structure may not be realized.

“...community development is perhaps best used to describe those approaches that look to cultivate mutual aid, local networks and communal coherence. In many respects as a body of thinking and practice it links strongly to more recent concerns around the cultivation of social capital.”

7.4 Pillars of Sustainability

Sustainability pillars are those system qualities and characteristics that support sustainable effort; they result from sustainable practice. In social sciences there are six common pillars; cultural, social, the natural environment, the built environment, economics and governance. The list varies from one context to another and each pillar is variously defined.

Community planners consider eight sustainable core aspects; Land use, Transportation,

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Buildings, Landscape, Food, Infrastructures, Economic investment, jobs and business, and Community process, facilities and programs. For many people, "sustainable" brings to mind things like climate change and resource conservation. The environment is just one piece; sustainability is a commitment that future generations will be economically prosperous, socially just, and environmentally healthy using renewable and preserved resources. Sustainable development, it is argued, really rests on just three pillars; ecological, economic and social. If either one gives way sustainability collapses.

While there are a number of systems and indicators for the environmental pillar, economic and social sustainability are less developed. In the late 1980's, the four pillars of community sustainability – economic, environmental, cultural and social – were defined. Governance was later added. The regional ICSP outlined below is based on these five pillars. The ICSP reflects the sustainability challenges identified in a self-assessment process and gathered from consultations with the four regional ICSP committees.

8.0 COMMUNICATIONS

The Internet offers many ways to access municipal knowledge and can be used to great advantage by councillors needing information, examples, programs or opportunities; for contact with citizens or to conduct polls. Training in the use of information and communications technologies should be part of every council budget; communications plans should include taking advantage of communications infrastructures, use, development and support. A council that controls its Internet has a powerful tool to increase citizen engagement. Generally small towns have fallen well behind their citizens in the use of Internet-based new technologies. All towns can easily participate as part of regional, multi-town approach.

Using Internet applications for training opportunities, for sharing knowledge inside and outside the region, gives councils great opportunity to orient newly elected councillors and staff. On a regional basis, several councils can take advantage of training

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opportunities with cost shared savings.

Print media (newspapers, newsletters, magazines, brochures, flyers) carry the promise of universal coverage (everyone has a mailing address) but delivery to an address doesn't mean transfer of information; many flyers never make it past the post office trash bin. And, print is now expensive for the coverage afforded. A communications plan that looks at the costs and effects of various media will show Internet communications to be of great benefit to towns.

8.1 The Grapevine

Small towns, like those in the Irish Loop, probably already have what seems to be an adequate communications network – word of mouth. News and views expressed in council are quick to make the rounds, especially when it involves contentious issues or decisions that will cost public money or be seen to raise taxes. These informal, grapevine style communications can be strengthened and advanced by planning to use them in more formal ways. A telephone calling tree where five people called five people would have news traveling around town fairly quickly; the only rub is that it would have to be consistently and regularly used and it is essentially one way; the same as print materials. Two-way information flows require robust and flexible systems, such as those now offered through the Internet.

8.2 The Digital Grapevine

A social network is a social structure made of individuals (let's say town councils and citizens) called "nodes," which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of relationship, such as municipal governance issues. There can be many kinds of ties between nodes. Research in a number of academic fields shows social networks operate on many levels, from families, through communities and regions, up to the level of nations. They play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved,

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organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals. A network can also be used to measure social capital – the value that an individual (any node) gets from the social network.

Facebook and Twitter are arguably the most commonly used social networking sites in the world. Ready-made web pages, no design or maintenance costs, and universal accessibility are the cornerstones of Web 2.0 social networks. Many citizens and councillors are already experienced in social networking, making it even easier for towns to develop and maintain a web presence. An article about business uses for social networking suggests the benefits are greater than expected and are accrued faster than expected: Interestingly, benefits were seen evenly across the range of corporate interactions — between employees, with customers, and with suppliers/partners. These consist of better access to knowledge (68%), reduced communication costs (54%), more effective marketing (52%), increased customer satisfaction (43%), and even increased employee satisfaction (36%).

Translating “business” to “council” and “customers” to “citizens” gives a rough idea of how useful Web 2.0 networks can be to improve municipal systems and relationships. The article emphasizes how social networking is becoming an important basis for collaborations between interested, sharing partners in all development areas.

9.0 MUNICIPAL TRAINING and ORIENTATION

Modern times require modern ways. Councils need specific skills to understand and manage change while governing wisely; to be accountable in an “open” age; and to do it in sustainable ways. Those elected to council must have knowledge of laws, liabilities, programs, policies and plans; they need the skills to recognize and seize opportunity; they need skills to collaborate, negotiate, and investigate. Some say municipal training should be mandatory.

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The Municipal Training and Development Corporation (MTDB) “promotes the knowledge and skills development of municipally-elected officials and administrators in Newfoundland and Labrador by providing learning experiences directly relevant to the municipal context”. MTDC hold symposiums and delivers municipal information training courses; all backed up by a set of handbooks on municipal operations, and a financing plan that covers 50% of eligible costs along with an application form, all on-line. SSTPCS group towns took advantage of five out of 15 training opportunities recently offered.

Larger Irish Loop towns take advantage of municipal training more often than smaller towns. The cut-off appears at about 500 people. Six towns took advantage of three or more training opportunities; seven took advantage of two or less. Three towns above 500 people accounted for 11 of the 28 opportunities (39.3%).

The President's Task Force on Municipal Sustainability, issued by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador on 30 July 2009, reports on their Local Action for Developing Regions (LADR) program. The number of attending towns is not given but it found two main splits (80/20 small towns/large towns and a 55/45 municipal staff/elected officials) in those attending. They attended to learn about *Accessing Funding* and *Financing and Municipal Taxation*. LADR is backed by a series of development guides on Municipal Taxation and Shared Municipal Services among other topics. There is a cost.

Municipal training should not be thought of as being "just for councils"; citizens are also lacking in general municipal governance knowledge. Much of the apathy and bad attitude comments heard at consultation meetings stems from lack of interest but it also stems from ignorance of the role and activities played out by a council. To judge a council as 'not doing anything for the people' grows out of the simple fact the judge doesn't understand council. Either on a local, regional, or provincial level councils must find ways and participate in schemes to educate the public. Knowledge brings

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engagement.

10.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is obvious from consultations and comments that citizens are not fully aware of the many things councils do on their behalf. Table 10.1 below gives a quick look at normal council activities.

Table 10.1 Council Activities

| Council Activities |
|---|
| represent citizens at public events and functions |
| take training to better skills in management of municipal affairs |
| prepare budgets; source revenues; approve expenditures |
| plan and manage town works |
| deliver services |
| negotiate and manage contracts |
| direct and supervise town workers and employees |
| perform complex, public accountability operations |
| manage roles of clerk, manager/planner |
| manage and administer all council functions |

As Table 10.2 below outlined, citizens serve on town councils for any number of reasons; some are shown in the table.

Table 10.2 Reasons to Serve

| Reasons to Serve |
|--|
| interest in town affairs and operations |
| wanting to contribute to town growth and development |
| volunteering, altruism |
| recognized ability to represent fellow citizens |
| wanting to be part of effecting community change |
| desire to develop and improve social capital |

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recognized ability to plan and implement social and political activities

A municipal council has to count on the volunteer efforts of individual councillors and mayors. It is estimated that 70 volunteer hours are required a week (280 a month) for municipal governance to work effectively; a monthly council meeting with 7 people uses only 21 hours or so leaving 260 begging. There needs to be greater effort to solve this problem as municipal governance becomes more challenging, demands more attention, requires greater effort, and struggles with increasingly complex rules, programs and initiatives. All this places a heavy workload on a volunteer council. Without training and awareness elected councillors cannot always tackle their full municipal obligation.

There is a clear recognition that some compensation for council activity is desirable but there is an equally strong aversion to the recognition that such expenditures can only come from increased tax. In the meantime compensation, often nominal, honorary, or direct expense-based, is the norm in most Canadian towns.

Sustainable councils are open and transparent; seek and respect citizens' input into development and administration; seek and achieve community consensus on major development decisions; continually inform citizens; and they offer knowledge building and knowledge sharing opportunities to citizens (town halls, workshops, round tables). A sustainable council is supported by willing taxpayers who are satisfied their affairs are in capable hands and that they have real opportunities to say how their money is spent.

11.0 COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Communities acting together are collaborating; collaborating is the only process to “go regional”. Collaborating on a regional ICSP is a firm first or second step along the path towards regionalization. On this there is no doubt, nor is there dismay. Formal collaborations have goals and objectives as agreed to by the participants (like an ICSP, for example). All partners in collaboration are equal partners and partnership requires commitment and resource allocation to go forward. Consensus, not majority rule, is the

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norm for collaborators; if someone gets offside collaborative momentum is lost and the collaboration likely fails.

Regional social associations and organizations can often work as a collaborative focus for towns to achieve agreed to goals. There are many social organizations structured on a regional basis active in communities from Kinsmen, Lions and the Knights of Columbus and many communities are active members of the Irish Loop Chamber of Commerce and the Southern Avalon Tourism Association. Perhaps the most significant forum for collaboration have been council engagement in regional joint councils.

12.0 REGIONAL SERVICES

There is a high level of existing shared municipal services among neighbouring towns. Economic necessity dictates they are the three basic services and, in most towns the only services - waste management (garbage collection and disposal), emergency services (volunteer fire department), local roads (snow clearing and maintenance). Towns and unincorporated areas collect and provide a fee to share another town's facilities and equipment. Recently the need to regionalize these services has caused considerable debate over how to do this and what it means. There are several examples of town water systems funded by direct fees or water taxes paid by residents.

Existing service sharing arrangements between towns is laudable and indicative of regional thinking. It is one of the main ways small towns can save administration money which is an important goal for most councils.

13.0 REGIONAL PLANNING

Municipalities in most provinces are required to participate in regional planning; most have a regional planning line item in their budgets. In Newfoundland, the URBAN AND RURAL PLANNING ACT, 2000 covers everything required for regional and municipal plans. As the actions suggested by the ICSP are “regional” in nature, they and the ICSP

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itself can be considered an important part of any future regional plan.

Additionally, towns are linked to regional planning initiatives in relation to economic development through the activities and partnerships of the local regional economic development boards (REDBs). The core functions for REDB outlined in Section 2.2 above provide not only a framework for the work of the board but also imply engagement on the part of local partners, most particularly that of local governments.

Going regional and participating in regional affairs brings a town well along the sustainability path. What is now demanded of towns is scrupulous attention to a plan and to the planning process; sustainable is forever; sustainability must be reviewed and checked regularly; sustainable practices are flexible and changeable; sustainable government is transparent, representative, open-minded, sharing, and leading. Attaining sustainability is a recorded and documented process; policy goals today may not require action until generations later.

14.0 ICSP PILLARS and PRINCIPLES

14.1 Pillars of Sustainability

The Towns of Aquaforte, Ferryland and Cape Broyle agreed to develop a regional Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. Five required areas of sustainable practice were identified by the Newfoundland and Labrador Municipal Affairs Department as necessary for towns to be considered for federal Gas Tax Fund refunds;

- Environmental Sustainability
- Economic Sustainability
- Social Sustainability
- Cultural Sustainability
- Governance Sustainability

14.2 Statement of ICSP Principles

The Towns of Aquaforte, Ferryland and Cape Broyle wish to support municipal and regional sustainability and commit ourselves to the following:

- We wish to see ourselves as towns that embrace the principles and practices of sustainability; share opportunities, resources and knowledge; and support the use of collaboration to provide common, regional municipal services.
- We commit to practice sustainable principles in matters of social, cultural, environmental, governmental, and financial development.
- We recognize the long-term nature of this plan; the opportunity to use Gas Tax rebates to further municipal development; and that collaboration is essential to further these goals.
- We commit to increasing and enhancing our communications capacity and to explore digital communications opportunities to promote sustainable activities and developments.
- We commit to annually review our sustainable practices and to renew and re-set ICSP goals.
- We recognize these agencies have information and expertise to help achieve these goals:

Department of Municipal Affairs

Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Municipal Administrators

Irish Loop Development Board

Harris Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland

15.0 INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

15.1 Environmental Sustainability

The key aspects of environmental sustainability include reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and the production of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing uses of chemicals and other manufactured substances that can accumulate in the environment, and the protection of ecosystem integrity and diversity. The objectives below will guide individual and collaborative effort in relation to the environmental sustainability pillar:

Objective: Sustainable towns assess their environmental footprint.

Action: We will assess our regional environmental footprint using self-assessment tools and existing documents.

Objective: Sustainable towns promote and practice environmental awareness.

Action: We will promote and practice environmental awareness by using environmental friendly systems and materials and by accessing environmental programs and resources.

15.2 Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability focuses on development, not simply growth. This implies that economic activity is conducive to sustainable development and is within the capacity of communities to sustain through existing or future resources. The objectives below will guide individual and collaborative effort in relation to the economic sustainability pillar:

Objective: Sustainable towns maintain membership in regional development groups and associations.

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Action: We will ensure memberships and up to date and active.

Objective: Sustainable towns provide professional training for elected councillors and staff.

Action: We will provide professional training for councillors and staff.

15.3 Social Sustainability

Community social sustainability enhances social integration and improves living conditions for all citizens. It ensures that basic needs of citizens are met, that environments are developed to meet child and family needs, that there is equal access to programs, services and opportunities, that there is a sense of mutual support and harmony and that citizens are encouraged and engaged in community. The objectives below will guide individual and collaborative effort in relation to the social sustainability pillar:

Objective: Sustainable towns maintain a list of social groups and their contact information.

Action: We will create and update this list.

Objective: Sustainable towns collaborate with social groups and sponsor social activities and events.

Action: We will be open to requests for town inputs to social activities and events.

Objective: Sustainable towns assess their social capacity and social capital.

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Action: We will assess our regional social capacity and social capital through the use of self-assessment tools and reviews of existing documentation, and consultations with those on the social groups list.

Objective: Sustainable towns assess and prioritize their social needs.

Action: We will assess and prioritize our regional social needs.

15.4 Cultural Sustainability

Cultural sustainability is considered an intangible in many respects yet affords significant potential in terms of long term sustainable development. Promotion of community identity while utilizing culture as an economic generator are priorities for many communities. The objectives below will guide individual and collaborative effort in relation to the cultural sustainability pillar:

Objective: Sustainable towns maintain a list of cultural groups and their contact information.

Action: We will create and update this list.

Objective: Sustainable towns collaborate with cultural groups and sponsor cultural activities and events.

Action: We will be open to requests for town inputs to cultural activities and events.

Objective: Sustainable towns assess their cultural capacity and cultural capital.

Action: We will assess regional cultural capacity and cultural capital through the

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use of self-assessment tools and reviews of existing documentation, and consultations with those on the cultural groups list.

Objective: Sustainable towns have an inventory of built heritage and historic resources.

Action: We will participate with its partners to create a regional built heritage and historic resources inventory.

Objective: Sustainable towns assess and prioritize their cultural needs.

Action: We will assess and prioritize regional cultural needs.

15.5 Governance Sustainability

Governance refers to the capacity of communities to manage and operate their individual municipalities and increasingly the emerging regional partnerships necessary to achieve sustainability. Considerations in this respect include staff resources, volunteer leadership, committee processes, planning, civic engagement and decision-making. The objectives below will guide individual and collaborative effort in relation to the governance sustainability pillar:

Objective: Sustainable towns maintain membership in municipal groups and associations.

Action: We will ensure memberships and up to date and active.

Objective: Sustainable towns arrange professional training for elected councillors and staff.

Action: We will provide professional training for councillors and staff.

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Objective: Sustainable towns have excellent communications with their citizens.

Action: We will assess our regional communications needs and take action to improve municipal communications.

16.0 COLLABORATIVE ICSP IMPLEMENTATION

16.1 ICSP Governance

An ICSP Committee will be developed and will meet four times a year to prioritize action items and review plan details. The ICSP Committee will include Mayors (or their designates) and town clerks.

16.2 ICSP Actions and Accountability

The ICSP action items cover the components towns will need in place to be considered sustainable. Quality management and modern municipal practice requires accountability based on evidence (such as minutes of meetings; documentation; reports; records) and actions based in a plan. Formally adopting plans, and then performing actions based in them, is the first step towards sustainability. The ICSP process will be ongoing and the collaborative ICSP will become a living document, changed and amended over time. The data, reports, and documents generated by the actions, when reviewed, will help council renew their plan and plan future actions.

16.3 ICSP in Practice – The Sustainability Lens

Towns committed to the principles of sustainability will practice sustainability by subjecting each development decision to a full discussion of these three questions.

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What are the long-term impacts and implications on the community's environmental, economic, social, cultural and governance assets?

Sustainability is thought of in terms of generations and centuries. Decisions made today will impact future councils and developments. Short-term benefits may have negative impacts a generation later. Impacts and predictions must recognize positive and negative aspects. Even the best laid plan can have hidden negativity. It is important to determine as many impacts as possible and to plan for their occurrence.

Has the public provided input to the decision, do they support it, or what should be done to gain public input and support?

Citizen input relies on councils with open communications and comprehensive consultation skills. Engaging the public in council affairs depends on breaking down barriers of apathy and disinterest. Councils that communicate their long term vision with their citizens make sustainable decisions.

What advantage or progress is made by collaborating with neighbouring towns?

Regional approaches are definitely cost effective and recognize the community's place and role in the region. The differences between neighbouring towns is slight, the commonalities great. Development decisions made by a town will have definite impact on the neighbours; sustainable practice requires the neighbours be part of the consultative process if not always a full collaborator.

16.4 Regional ICSPs and Capital Investment Plan Considerations

Gas Tax Fund (GTF) spending must be approved by provincial authority using the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) process prepared by each municipality. Municipalities

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were quite firm in their contention that the Collaborative ICSP not limit the capacity of individual towns to set their own capital works and infrastructure priorities within the CIP process. To the extent that the proposed capital investments are grounded within the sustainable objectives outlined above, the Collaborative ICSP will guide an individual municipality's requests for support under the Capital Investment Plan. As such, capital infrastructure planning and the CIP will remain town specific. However, any capital project in one town can be seen to have a regional impact. Managing those impacts is an important characteristic of sustainable practice and requires consultation with the neighbours.

16.5 ICSP Capacity and the GTF

One of the recurring themes throughout the consultation and plan development process was the limited capacity of local governments to support planning and implementation of collaborative approaches. Integrated Community Sustainability Plan implementation will require at minimum an ongoing commitment of scarce town resources in terms of volunteers and staff and in certain instances opportunities may exist for external supports to facilitate plan implementation and to build additional community and regional collaborative capacity.

In this regard, municipalities involved with this collaboration will consider resources required to implement the ICSP actions and determine how best to meet these needs, possibly through existing resources within each town but as well through recourse to capacity supports as an eligible expense under the GTF and reflected within individual municipalities' CIPs.

16.6 The real challenge

"Who can save our rural Newfoundland towns?" is a question regularly heard at development and planning meetings over the past two decades. The answer is now, as

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always, "Only you can save yourselves." In practical terms *a surviving town* is a *sustainable town*; sustainable towns survive because of their capacity to manage prudently in changing circumstances, to plan for the future, and, to find advantage in group development.

17.0 SOURCES

Section 2.0 Newfoundland Government Press Release and Gas Tax Eligibility material from:

www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/ma/0409n10.htm

www.ma.gov.nl.ca/ma/gta/CIPInformationPackage.pdf

Section 3.0 Global sustainability origins and approaches taken from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_for_Sustainable_Development

Section 4.1 Table digested from Sustainability Self-Assessment toolkit results; for details see:

www.icspildb.ca/documents.pdf

Section 6.0 Population and dwelling counts, tax information from:

www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/

www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/getdata.asp

Section 7.0 Benefits of social networking for businesses from:

www.smartplanet.com/business/blog/business-brains/study-yes-there-is-payback-from-social-networking-web-20/1997/

Section 7.2 Social networking materials from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_capital

Section 8.0 data collected by private communication from unpublished data held by MNL

Section 9.0 tables and data collected by interview with municipal government leaders

Section 13.0

Process details and findings are found at www.icsp.ildb.ca/documents.pdf

Four visions were collected as impressions during interviews, consultations and readings