

# Northeast Avalon Municipal Service Sharing Case Study

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## Municipal Service Sharing<sup>1</sup> Overview

The northeast Avalon region, as defined by the membership of Northeast Avalon Joint Council<sup>2</sup>, includes 19 municipalities and several (#?) Local Service Districts. With the exception of five communities northwest of Holyrood all sit on the peninsula of land in the northeast corner of the Avalon Peninsula (see Figure 1). Thirteen different types of service sharing arrangements in the region are discussed in this case study, ranging from water supply to planning and economic development. Within categories such as animal control and fire protection different arrangements are in place among distinct sub-regional groupings of communities. These arrangements exhibit an array of approaches from informal, handshake agreements with little to no financial implications to multi-million dollar legal contracts and legislated regional services. Details of each of these arrangements organized by service category are provided below, followed by some general observations of lessons learned over more than fifty years of experience in municipal collaboration. See also Appendix 1 – Service Sharing Summary Table and Appendix 2 - Service Sharing Timeline.

Map



Source: Modified from CCDA or StatsCan

## General Characteristics of the Region

The Northeast Avalon is home to 35% of Newfoundland and Labrador's citizens. Overall the region, a provincial service centre, is prosperous and has a stable population base. Some areas, particularly those immediately surrounding the City of St. John's, have experienced significant growth over the past decade. In total 91% of the region's residents live in six communities within or immediately surrounding the City. Population growth in this segment of the region is expected to continue. Conception Bay South (CBS) for example is expected to double, reaching over 40,000 residents, while the Town of Paradise is being designed as a community of 30,000 (current population 12,000).

A February 2005 labour force survey suggests an unemployment rate of 9.1% for the St. John's Census metropolitan area (CMA), encompassing all communities in the region outside of Conception Bay Central (CBC), compared to rates of 22-29% elsewhere in the Province. The average family income for Economic Zone 19 (all Northeast Avalon communities except Witless Bay and Bay Bulls) is 1.2 times the provincial average and third among all economic zones

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<sup>1</sup> Sharing is defined in this study as the provision of services by one municipality to another, whether or not it involves a financial payment or formal, legal agreement.

<sup>2</sup> This is the most inclusive of the various boundaries used for the Northeast Avalon. Economic Zone 19 excludes Bay Bulls and Witless Bay. The Statistics Canada St. John's CMA excludes Conception Bay Central (CBC) and St. John's Urban Region excludes all of CBC other than Holyrood.

(CCDA 2005). Yet there are pockets within the urban core and communities in the outlying areas that have not shared in this economic success.

Corresponding with municipal size, in terms of both geography and population, the region's 19 municipalities vary in their municipal budgets, numbers of employees, tax rates and financial positions. As in other areas of the province, municipalities have seen cutbacks in their Municipal Operating Grants (from \$12 to 4 million in St. John's, for example). At the same time, representatives point out that the Province has invested millions of dollars over the last several years in cost-shared capital works. See Appendix 3 for a table of municipal characteristics (population, tax rates, budget, employees).

## **Shared Services**

### 1. Animal Control

When the Town of Paradise was told by the SPCA that their dog kennel was “not up to scratch” Manager Paul Martin approached his colleague, Mount Pearl City Manager Gerard Lewis with his problem. “It was pretty informal. I just went and asked if they could help us out with our dogs and they said sure. We would have needed a new facility, open 24 hours, with personnel to feed the dogs on holidays and weekends. So we worked out a deal”.

Fees for impounding and euthanizing services are reviewed annually by the two municipalities but have stayed “pretty well set” for the last three or four years. No substantial increases have occurred since the arrangement began in 1994. Fees are only raised when costs go up. “The last time when we were passed along a euthanasia fee that was increased and we of course passed it along to the Town of Paradise as well”. The City charges Paradise \$200-300 per month, totalling approximately \$4000 per year.

The arrangement and conditions are outlined in a letter sent to Martin by the City in 1994. Town of Paradise enforcement staff capture animals and transport them to Mount Pearl. Built in the early 1980s to meet SPCA specifications their \$65,000 animal control facility is large enough to accommodate several municipalities. The City offered all adjoining municipalities the opportunity Paradise staff are responsible for dealings with Paradise citizens. If residents want to reclaim their animal they must make the financial arrangements with the Town before pick-up. Animals (both cats and dogs) are kept for a minimum of 48 hours and if there is no recall the euthanasia process begins.

Like Paradise, CBS had a similar problem with an older facility that did not meet SPCA standards. They decided to build new. The City of St. John's euthanizes CBS animals at no cost and in return CBS transports animals from both municipalities to Holyrood for incineration. The arrangement is informal (no written agreement). The CBS pound facility is used by Harbour Main-Chapels Cove-Lakeview, which in turn provides animal control services to the other communities of CBC. Towns are billed a set fee for each captured dog. When the CBS facility was being built the City of Mount Pearl provided interim use of their building.

Yet another partnership in animal control is in place between the Towns of Torbay, Flatrock and Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove. The arrangement between Flatrock and Torbay has been in place for approximately ten years and involves a formal written agreement outlining a yearly fee for eight hours of coverage per week. Owners are responsible for payment of daily kennel fees upon pickup. Torbay recently opened a new kennel and has agreed to a six-month trial period providing animal control eight hours per week to Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove. The neighbouring community had approached them before but Torbay did not have the space to accommodate them until the new facility was constructed. Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove has the same regulations in place as Torbay. Flatrock's are slightly different but Animal Control Officer Dana Learning says that doesn't pose a problem. When there's a question she goes by the Municipal Dog Act.

Picture of animal control officer Dana Learning and dogs in new Torbay pound.

Learning is also Torbay's bylaw enforcement officer and finds the new responsibility do-able but challenging. She expects that a second part-time officer will need to be hired if the arrangement with Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove continues past the pilot project period. Dana prides herself on finding homes for the animals, which are primarily dogs. She has never had to put one down except for aggressive animals that pose a safety threat.

Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove attempted to share animal control services with the City of St. John's in a six-month trial period during the mid-1990s. The experiment was unsuccessful. Visiting officers couldn't go on private property because they were unfamiliar with who owned the dogs and the lots. The Town paid \$10,000 and after two trips per week for six months only one or two dogs were caught, ones that they owners wanted to get rid of. Scheduling was also to blame. Officers came at regular times and residents knew when to expect them, making sure their animals did not roam during these times. The Town has since tried an idea offered by Carbonnear. Photos of roaming dogs are taken by existing Town staff and sent to residents along with their fine.

## 2. Community policing

The Town of Torbay acquired a one-person satellite office of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) in 2002. The station is meant to serve the entire St. John's East area. The Town provides the space downstairs in their Town Hall. The RNC's presence at the Town Hall site provides visibility and improved police access and presence for Torbay and neighbouring communities.

## 3. Economic development

Northeast Avalon municipal representatives described two vehicles for collaboration in economic development: Capital Coast Development Alliance (CCDA) and sub-regional tourism associations such as Killick Coast Tourism Association (KCTA), Admirals' Coast Regional Tourism Steering Committee and Destination St. John's. Economic development issues also arise at meetings of the Northeast Avalon Joint Council.

Each municipality has a notably different approach to and level of involvement in the field of economic development. A representative from Portugal Cove-St. Philips explains, “We border St. John’s and the economy here has been growing, it’s not as big of an issue as in other areas. The focus here is on residential development versus industrial and commercial.” The Town of Paradise pursues economic development but for the most part prefers to work on its own. The Town but will cooperate when there is a need or demonstrated benefit, or sometimes just to show support. Seeking to attract more business as they grew after amalgamation with St. Thomas in 1991, the Town successfully approached ACOA for marketing dollars. They have been pursuing business attraction as an economic development strategy since this time.

The City of St. John’s views their role in economic development as one of making it easier for business, streamlining the development approval process. “Provincial policy and legislation has changed to give municipalities more autonomy in development”, Ron Penney explains. “The City has to be sensitive and conduct consultation but at the same time be responsive to business”. The City has also sold land for business development purposes.

The City of Mount Pearl launched an extensive economic development program after the early 1990s economic downturn. A Task Force on Economic Development, established in 1995, developed a five-year strategic plan. In January 1996 an Economic Development Department was established. The result was the recruitment of 211 companies, creating more than 1,000 jobs in the first 19 months (Mount Pearl 1997). Census data suggest that in 2000 the City was a net importer of jobs. More people were commuting in to than out of Mount Pearl for work.

CBS has an Economic Development Coordinator who meets regularly and has a “good working relationship” with other communities and organizations such as the CCDA, Community Futures, the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism Association and the Cruise Ship Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. Pouch Cove has a community development committee and Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove formed a Development Corporation in the mid 1990s.

In February 1995 the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced a new approach to regional economic development in the Province. Twenty Regional Economic Development Boards were established, including what would become the Capital Coast Development Alliance on the northeast Avalon. The purpose of the Board was to plan and implement regional economic development initiatives in partnership with municipalities, rural development associations and other development groups (CCDA 2005). The CCDA Board of Directors includes appointed seats from City Councils of St. John’s and Mount Pearl along with a representative each for Northeast Avalon Joint Council and small municipalities.

The organization has played an important role in regional tourism efforts such as the Admirals’ Coast and Killick Coast themed tourism routes and the formation of related tourism associations. “They’ve been the main driver. We wouldn’t have been able to do it without them.” Portugal Cove-St. Philips points out that ideas for economic development and tourism projects such as signage and kiosks have come out of regional organizations such as CCDA and KCTA, both of which they participate in as members. Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove representatives suggest that

the CCDA has been instrumental in assisting with implementation of their Development Corporation's Strategic Plan, accessing hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects.

"A lot of municipal human resources are maxed out. They might have a part-time Clerk or Manager... It helps to have someone to help out". "There's volunteer overload," adds a Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove Council member. "CCDA has been fantastic," suggests Torbay Deputy Mayor and CCDA small municipalities representative Peggy Roche. "They've helped us with proposals for the development of the KCTA, and with a staff coordinator for the community's 2005 Come Home Celebrations". A Pouch Cove representative adds, "They're always willing to help. Any small town can't afford an EDO. We're 20 towns sharing one EDO office... They can get funding, they have the expertise and are well trained."

Picture of Dawn at CCDA

CCDA Development Officer Dawn Chaplin has been working with the communities of CBC to develop community economic development strategies for each Town and for the (sub)region as a whole. Plans include regional service sharing as a strategy for providing basic infrastructure and community services. She notes the progress. "Early meetings were all about turf protection. Avondale never used to come to a meeting. Now they're looking at putting everything on the table to see what they can share."

While small communities more readily promote the benefits of the CCDA, Northeast Avalon Joint Council Chair Walter Butt suggests that the Joint Council as a whole, representing 21 (?) communities, are very supportive of the organization and its accomplishments. "We have voiced our very strong opinion that Zone 19 must stay". Programs have been launched by the organization to address issues in the urban core such as programs for youth who have dropped out of school. Research, conducted in cooperation with the Strategic Social Planner who worked out of the CCDA office, suggests that there are pockets of poverty within the urban core. The Urban Development Initiative has been launched as a result, in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade. Co-location and shared boundaries between the SSP planning area and Economic Zone 19 has facilitated integration of social and economic development initiatives in the region. Representatives are uncertain what impact changes under the new Rural Secretariat will have.

In the Admirals' Coast tourism efforts are now largely industry driven. The CBS Chamber of Commerce originally resisted the idea of a separate tourism group but a Regional Tourism Steering Committee is now up-and-running with their support. The Town of CBS was a lead partner, organizing a community meeting in 1998 where all parties agreed on the need to cooperate in tourism promotion and development. KCTA, on the other hand, is driven by representatives from seven member municipalities. Two representatives from each Town sit on the Association's Board and meet monthly in rotating communities. CCDA has assisted with planning and funding proposals for both groups.

A third tourism organization in the region is Destination St. John's, "an industry-driven destination marketing organization whose primary role is to represent St. John's to key travel trade representatives" through marketing/promotional activities (Destination St. John's 2005). The City of St. John's has two representatives on the Board of Destination St. John's, one for the City itself and another representing the City's wholly owned subsidiary St. John's Sports and Entertainment Ltd. Destination St. John's was formed in 2004, renamed for marketing purposes from the Avalon Convention and Visitors Bureau (formed in 1997/98). Market research determined that people recognize the name of the City more than the Avalon region. The organization has members from both government and industry. The organization assisted in building the Civic Centre and implementing a 3% room tax in 1998. Revenues from the new tax are shared between the City and the organization. The first \$500,000 was directed toward the capital debt for the new stadium and the next \$250,000 toward Destination St. John's. Future revenues are to be equally shared. The City contributes \$20,000 per year to the organization.

Despite successes municipal leaders, particularly those with larger populations and their own economic development resources and staff, suggest that there have been many challenges and frustrations along the way with the regional economic development approach. One City of St. John's representative reports that they see few real benefits from CCDA with the exception was CCDA's role in starting the Quidi Vidi development plan. The City then took that over and bought the land.

One challenge referred to by interview respondents is the diversity of the region. "It's an interesting dynamic," says Chaplin "we've got the Province's largest urban core and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest rural population..." "There's 19 communities, each with their agenda, there's competition, politics... It's a diplomatic art to get commonality," states one municipal representative. For Paradise tourism is not a significant economic driver while others look to tourism as a key area of potential economic growth. Through discussions at the Northeast Avalon Joint Councils it was determined that for many communities, particularly those experiencing decreasing populations and economic activity, the delivery of basic services was an increasing challenge. They called upon CCDA to assist with organizing planning sessions to discuss opportunities for shared service delivery. While organizers report that progress was made in bridging the region's urban/rural divide through this process (both recognizing the importance of the other) one representative of a growing, economically vibrant municipality explains his frustration: "There was a meeting at the Wilds about joint issues. We were supposed to be talking about economic development and we ended up focusing on animal control". Session evaluations were, however, positive and encouraged a continuation of the process. Three priority areas were identified (a regional economic development strategy, home-based business and communications). Sub-committees in each area are being developed.

Another common concern is that initiatives move too slowly. "It has some good coordinating functions but the process of getting things done is too slow. There are lots of committees, talk, studies but its tough to get things going. It's too slow for us... we tend to be ahead of the game on a lot of it," remarked one community representative while another states, "There are benefits to participation but the wheels move too slow." In several cases these comments were associated with tourism signage initiatives in which CCDA has played an important role, working with local tourism associations. The groups have encountered numerous provincial and federal regulations

and funding challenges along the way that have slowed the process. “We spearheaded a group, with the CCDA, to get our area designated as a themed route. It took three years but now we have it, the Admiral’s Coast. The decision about the name was made. You’d think it would take maximum six months to get signage. It took one year.” Work on the designation of a theme route for the Admirals’ Coast began in the 1980s and was not achieved until 2002. Members contributed to the costs of publishing a guidebook for the area after a proposal for funding was turned down. Similarly the KCTA began to organize in 1999 and identified signage as a need early on. They were turned down for funding because they weren’t a recognized tourism organization and because they hadn’t hired a consultant. The group worked with CCDA to develop a new proposal, hire a consultant and rewrite their materials. “It delayed us two years.” Portugal Cove-St. Philips adds that the ongoing challenge of getting funding is the key challenge they’ve seen in economic development.

#### 4. Fire protection

There are 13 fire departments in the Northeast Avalon region, both composite and volunteer. The largest is the St. John’s Regional Fire Department (SJRFD). City of St. John’s and City of Mount Pearl are full partners in the Department. St. John’s has legal ownership of the department and assumes responsibility for day-to-day operations, but the service is to be operated and managed by a committee with equal representation from both Cities under the amended City of St. John’s Act (1990, amended 1996).

The SJRFD provides full fire protection and emergency services under contract to the Towns of Paradise and Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove. The municipalities of Logy Bay-Outer Cove-Middle Cove, CBS, Torbay and Wabana utilize the Department as a back up to their own volunteer and composite (CBS) departments. The Department also has a mutual aid agreement with the airport. SJRFD responds to calls at the airport in exchange for occasional use of their crash vehicle.

The Department has seven Fire Stations including Goulds, 164 full-time staff and 20-30 recruit firefighters along with nearly 30 administrative, training, fire prevention, communications and support staff. Services include fire suppression and prevention, vehicle and medical response. Specialized equipment and training required for hazardous materials response, cliff/high angle, confined space, helicopter, and water surface rescue have also been acquired.

The SJRFD’s new Central Fire Station, a \$5 million facility, was cost-shared on a 50/50 basis with The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs under the Multi-Year Capital Works Program. The Station houses firefighting personnel as well as support staff such as fire prevention training staff and administration, the City of St. John’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and The Northeast Avalon’s 911 communications centre. The centre receives approximately 20,000 calls per year. Each community in the region pays a 911 fee to the SJRFD, which is responsible for the dispatch of Fire, Police and Ambulance. Fees are disbursed based on last year’s calls. Police calls are paid by the Province, Ambulance by Health Services and fire by the municipalities.



Picture from 911 centre



“It’s been a rocky road,” says one long-time senior manager. Municipalities cannot tax the Province yet unlike other Canadian provinces no grant in lieu of taxes is provided. Instead the Province once provided funding for fire protection. This began to change in the 1980s, starting a trend that would add financial pressures to regional cooperation in delivery of fire protection services.

A fire department for the City of St. John’s was first established under British rule on July 4, 1895. After Confederation and prior to 1991 the Province owned and operated the fire department, billing the Cities of St. John’s and Mount Pearl for the services (using an 18/82% split) while serving the extended St. John’s urban area. Then, in 1991, the operation was turned over to the City of St. John’s, passing on the full cost to the soon-to-be two member Cities of the SJRFD and leading to careful examination of costs and options for cost recovery (confirm).

“The bottom line is that prior to that it was done by government for very little or no cost with the provincial government subsidizing it. When it was passed off to the City we couldn’t afford to subsidize it. When we starting cost-sharing out some of the municipalities on the NE Avalon thought they could do it cheaper and more cost effectively if they had their own fire departments and moved that direction. This is the creature that resulted”.

(Other story: From 1979 to 1984 the City of St. John’s ran the Fire Department and the Province provided funding to support service provision to outlying municipalities. Then the Province cutback to only funding a portion of cost).

#### *Mount Pearl and the Goulds join the Regional Service*

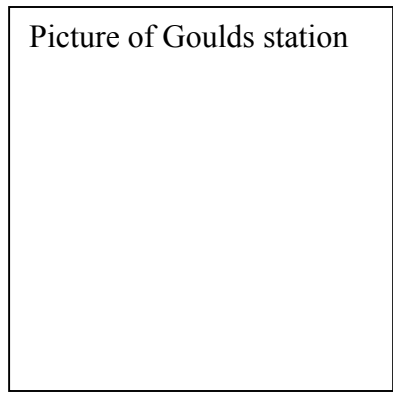
The Regional Service was radically transformed in 1992 when the Departments of both Goulds and Mount Pearl were transferred to the City of St. John’s during a round of municipal amalgamations. Forced by the provincial government of the day, the transition was strongly opposed by the City of Mount Pearl who had just established their own department when suddenly they were mandated to join with St. John’s

Mount Pearl was initially part of the St. John’s fire protection area but an analytical overview and studies by Memorial University suggested that the City was paying too much for their service. “The bigger you are the more costs go up”. A feasibility study determined in 1990 that starting their own department was the optimal strategy, providing a new facility with 24 firefighters for \$600,000 less than the annual cost of \$1.6 million paid to the Province at that point. Council decided to proceed with building and equipment purchase and hiring a Fire Chief. The City went to tender on trucks and apparatus, built a building at Olympic Drive, hired people and put them into training, and put in place a collective agreement. While the St. John’s department was totally paid, Mount Pearl’s was a composite. With six on shift at any time plus volunteers, the system capitalized on Mount Pearl’s strong volunteer base.

“We had our grand opening at 8 am,” explains Operations Manager Jim Oxford “and at noon we got the call.” The Province mandated that they become part of the regional system. “It was all scheduled to open, and it did at 8 am. At 12 noon Premier Wells proclaimed a piece of legislation that totally and unequivocally discriminated against the 25,000 people of Mount Pearl who are not allowed to have their own fire department”. Fourteen others were legislated in at the time as

well, recalls CAO Gerard Lewis, “but they all walked out except those who had their own departments at the time - Witless Bay, Torbay, CBS. Then the Province relented and let others such as Logy Bay-Outer Cove-Middle Cove and Portugal Cove-St. Philips form their own departments. But they wouldn’t let Mount Pearl out”. The move further complicated payroll and pension issues with staff now originally from the Province, City of St. John’s and Mount Pearl.

Goulds was amalgamated with the City of St. John’s during the same period. The Goulds volunteer fire department was integrated with the Regional Department but remained a composite



department with four full-time staff who work from Monday to Friday 8 am to 4 pm (when many volunteers are away for work) and 30 volunteers. The presence of the Goulds volunteer department within the regional system is a unique aspect of the SJRFD. Negotiating a collective agreement that included volunteers was challenging, reports Fire Chief/Director Michael Dwyer, but successfully accomplished. Volunteer commitment to the department remains strong. The Regional Fire Service recently purchased new exercise equipment, for example, for the Goulds. Volunteers constructed a new addition to the station to house it. Both fire fighters and their wives are now able to use the new fitness facility. The Goulds has its own Chief, who in turn reports to the Regional Chief and a separate budget of \$150,000 per year. While new trucks and bunker gear are marked St. John’s Regional Fire Department the rescue vehicle and pickup recognize the Goulds volunteers.

#### *Governance of the new regional fire service*

“We lost the battle and said lets make due the best we can”. Governance quickly became another topic of controversy in the newly regionalized fire service. After a series of negotiations Mount Pearl insisted on equal representation. “The City wasn’t very amenable but didn’t put up a major fight so the Province passed legislation”. A Board with 50% representation from each City, two elected members each plus staff as advisors, now make decisions on policy and budget. Paradise, one representative suggests, doesn’t want a role in running the Service. The Board meets a minimum of twice per year, typically quarterly. The City of St. John’s is responsible for day-to-day operations and has a process for preparation of the annual budget. The budget used to go through the City process and then to the Board, now representatives of Mount Pearl sit in on discussions with the City at the outset of the process. Mount Pearl also sits in on collective bargaining negotiation, participates in the hiring process and in the annual review of administrative structures. “It goes into all of the major cost drivers”.

Mount Pearl representatives feel they’ve had a major impact on efficiencies in the department. “We established in marketplace that the department was overstaffed, and through attrition brought it to national standards”. Stringent medical and physical fitness standards established for Mount Pearl’s department have also been incorporated into the SJRFD. The department requires a thorough medical and fitness test every two years and spends \$25,000 per year on fitness equipment, \$70,000 per year on gym memberships and \$70-80,000 per year on medicals for their staff.

The Board and Director also put in place a more organized equipment replacement policy. Block funding is given annually to the Director (Chief) rather than each purchase being a political decision of four. Mount Pearl follows this policy for its capital expenditures as well. “This way he doesn’t have to justify if a truck is worn out to people without the technical expertise to decide, but the Chief is also more accountable for the state of the equipment...”. “Before my time they had to go in and fight for a pick-up,” explains the current Director who is responsible for overseeing the department’s multi-million dollar budget. Today the capital budget allocation is \$600,000 per year. A five-year equipment replacement strategy was put in place in 2000. The management structure of the department has changed as well from one hands-on Fire Chief to two: one hands-on and one administrative Director. The Chief also has two Deputy Chiefs (both hands-on).

The Board has worked extremely well says one City representative. Dwyer concurs, “the Board had been very easy to work with.” Under the Act an independent person can step in to solve a dispute if need be but there has never been a need to call anyone, demonstrating that a shared governance model can work even in a forced situation. “We were never opposed to regional service, we were opposed to total control by one municipality. I doubt we’d go back now if we had a chance. We would change what we’ve got if anything. It’s a service we believe in now. It’s very well run, well managed and efficient. The costs have fallen for all residents through efficiencies. Given rising costs we’re in line with fire departments in Canada. Costs are kept at a minimum without compromising safety... if everything worked as well in the region as fire we’d all be happy. The governance model has everything to do with it. Equality at the table, no one is railroaded”.

*Contracts for service (full and backup)*

SJRFD sells services to adjoining municipalities under a variety of arrangements, including contracts for service, and standby fees plus fees for each response to cover costs of equipment and staff. The provision of these services is made possible because the Department has excess capacity. “If you have six stations if one goes to Paradise you still have five”.

<u>Outside Responses in 2000</u>	
Paradise	154
Petty Harbour	45
Torbay	22
Logy Bay-...	16
CBS	3
Pouch Cove	3
Wabana	3
Portugal Cove	1

The biggest source of debate about the regional fire service has been fair criteria for allocating costs. “One of the most challenging things is to remind people that they’re not going to get service for free. They need to pay their fair share”. But calculating what a fair share is has not been a simple matter. Paradise, for example, had no hydrants and therefore required tankers and longer response times.

An initial formula was developed based on assessment values (potential for loss). “If you’ve got 25 high rises there’s higher risk factors.” Another advantage is that an outside body establishes the assessments. But further considerations had to be taken into account. A Mount Pearl representative adds, “When we started in 1992, after the government decree, we came over and said its not fair with current fee structure. If you’re protecting an equivalent \$100,000 house response time matters. We looked at the six fire stations and did a map, dividing the areas by 1<sup>st</sup> response (6 min.), 2<sup>nd</sup> (8 min) and so on. For Portugal Cove-St. Philips, Bauline, anything beyond

1<sup>st</sup> response and without hydrants they would get a discount”. Community resources and calls per year are also considered. Previously costs had been based on a flat fee of \$30 per household.

“All hell broke loose... It took a while, a lot of back and forth and a long process of negotiation. After four years of fighting, all over rates and what was a fair share of costs, changes were made in 1996.” Revisions to Chapter 17 of the City of St. John’s Act in 1996 enshrined the four-person Board (regional fire services committee) structure and allowed for contracts to be signed with other municipalities for regional fire services with fees determined by the committee. The legislation also permitted the committee to withdraw services if fees were not paid.

“Paradise was quick to come on board. They were being urbanized at a fast rate, their population increasing. They were getting service for very little cost. The new agreement was fair and equitable. Others came kicking and screaming and still others have opted out”. Communities such as Paradise wanted some price stability for budgeting so agreements guaranteeing a cost for five years were negotiated. Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove had concerns about the costs being too high but decided after investigation that the fees were reasonable compared to providing their own service.

The 2005 the SJRFD budget was \$22 million overall, with Mount Pearl’s share at \$2,790,150 and Paradise’s \$475,000 per year with an escalator clause (to \$537,500 in 2009). Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove’s contract provides service at a cost of \$32,000 per year. The contract with Paradise includes a five-year projection on costs, growth and prices.

The Town of Paradise explains the benefits they have seen from participating in the regional service for more than 20 years. The Town just locked into a new 5-year agreement. The agreement didn’t change much. “Costs went up so there was a bit of a cost increase but not much”. Response time is less than ten minutes and discounts are provided for areas out of the ideal range. “They send the bill, at a fair rate, and then deliver the fire service, and other services such as car accident rescue. The written agreement is helpful for liability purposes and because it is a contract with money involved, and conditions and factors are laid out to arrive at costs”.

Paradise has found that the regional service works great as long as the larger department does not incur significant costs servicing outlying communities. It’s a benefit to both parties, explains a Town representative, “We don’t cost them anymore and they get a financial contribution toward their costs. We looked at composite like CBS that would have cost approximately the same but we’d have to build a hall, do the training, hire a captain, purchase equipment and the costs have gone way up since the study was done. We’re far better off. Then there’s the issues we cringe about as managers if you go on your own. It’s not only operating costs but the liability”.

A more recent source of contention has been the negotiation of a new and appropriate fee structure for backup/standby services to outlying municipalities. Prior to the 1990s fire services to outlying communities were provided at little to no charge. But when provincial funding policies changed and the Department was transferred to municipal control the City started charging. Services were provided on an as-needed fee-for-service basis under a Mutual Aid Agreement. A schedule of fees was provided for different pieces of equipment. After breaking down their costs in 2000 the Board felt that they should be receiving more to help offset their real

costs. Rather than being mutual aid, surrounding communities with volunteer departments, they point out, depend on the City when there is a fire during the day and most volunteers are at work in St. John's, or for major structural fires. Rates were raised to \$360/hr for a pumper, for example, from \$178. Even this hourly rate only covered the amortized cost of vehicles, vehicle maintenance and direct response costs but not the training, administration and others costs associated with the availability and provision of emergency services. The cost of moving equipment around to occupy empty stations once vehicles leave on a response call and the wear and tear on hoses and equipment other than vehicles also had to be considered. "The system wasn't fair to St. John's and Mount Pearl. It's like saying you don't want to pay your insurance until you need it," suggests Director Dwyer.

In April 2002 St. John's approached the neighbouring towns to pay a retainer fee for being available as backup, on top of the hourly charge for services when needed. Dwyer presented the proposal to the Northeast Avalon Joint Council based on his 2001 report, Cost Recovery for Emergency Services on the Northeast Avalon. There was no standard to follow so Dwyer and the Board applied the various factors used to calculate contract fees to arrive at a proposed fee for standby services. The proposal created "a big racket". A number of meetings were held with representatives of the Joint Council. In 2003 the Department provided a sample agreement and "the Joint Council had a lawyer review the contract on behalf of all of us. We all pitched in our share of the costs." More conversations were held outside of the Council and ultimately led to a number of agreements being signed in late 2004. Fees increases are being implemented gradually over a five-year period. Formalizing the backup arrangement in legal agreements has been another important aspect of this new era in backup services. Liability issues are spelled out in the service agreement, such as who pays the first \$250,000 in legal actions. "We'll likely never use the agreements on liability or insurance, but in the event we need it its there". Response conditions and procedures are also laid out. "It's up to the communities when we go. If we get a call from Torbay, there's a standard procedure. If there's a public assembly we go. If there's a structural fire we go. If there are people inside we are to respond automatically and then page the volunteers. In general if we page the volunteers and don't get a response within two minutes we go. If they respond in 2-3 minutes we don't charge, after 15 or 20 we do."

For CBS, signing a backup contract with the Regional Service was not an issue. The Town has its own composite department, with 10 full-time and 40 volunteer fire fighters. For CBS the primary benefit of the agreement is that it provides the Town with capability to handle incidents involving hazardous materials, along with other specialized equipment. "If a truckload of oil spills over our department doesn't have the expertise." The Town is negotiating to become one of ten provincial sites with a Hazmat trailer, serving all communities east of Clarenville, but will still avail of the Regional Department if the trailer is acquired. In 2004 CBS called the Department twice, including once when an aerial truck was required. "We know what the costs are," explains Manager Keith Arns, and because they have their own full-time fire fighters their backup/standby fee was only \$600 in 2004, which will rise to \$3000 over the next five years. The two departments have a good working relationship he adds. Discussions were held between CBS and Paradise about service provision and also with Holyrood, which has their own department, "but it never got far." CBS also responds on occasion to homes that are within the City boundaries but closer to the CBS station. In these cases, Arns describes, CBS "backs off" when the SJRFD arrives.

The Torbay Volunteer Department has 32 volunteers and prides itself and being efficient, well-trained and managed. The Town feels the backup arrangement with SJRFD is important because at times they are not able to guarantee coverage as many residents go away to work. It is also considered essential for response to facilities such as schools and senior's homes. Their agreement started at \$6000 in 2005 and will rise to \$24000 at the end of five-years. Torbay has provided (standby?) fire service to Flatrock since the early 1990s. The two Towns have a formal written agreement and are in the midst of negotiating new terms. Verbal mutual aid agreements ("more of an understanding") are also in place with neighbouring communities such as Pouch Cove, Bauline, Portugal Cove-St. Philips and Logy Bay-Outer Cove-Middle Cove. "If one's in trouble and the other has the resources we'll assist."

### *Opting Out*

The two communities of Pouch Cove and Portugal Cove-St. Philips were once provided backup service by the Regional Fire Department but have opted out of the new financial arrangement. Portugal Cove-St. Philips has a volunteer fire department comprised of 30-35 volunteers, including two Town staff. The department is active, getting together to meet and practice twice per week. It is equipped with two fire stations, an Emergency Rescue Unit, two pumper trucks and one 4X4, as well as a 1942 Bickle Seagrave pumper donated by the Peter Young family for special events.

When costs of City service got high, coupled with response time concerns, the Town moved to establish their own fire department with the SJRFD as a backup. Services were provided on an as needed basis by St. John's on an hourly rate. The Town wasn't happy when the 2002 proposal was made. They felt that if they were going to pay the retainer they should at least take the hourly fee off the retainer and that the proposal was unfair. "We've only called them once in the last eight years but they wanted an \$18,000 retainer this year, plus the hourly rate. The retainer would then escalate based on population growth. This was not considered a reasonable sharing arrangement".

The Town now has an emergency plan and verbal agreements for mutual response with Torbay, CBS and Pouch Cove. "We feel very secure with those relationships," explains Manager Barry Carroll. With very little industrial land and no high rise buildings fires in the community are largely residential. The fire department deals with the other departments, doing joint training from time to time. "They've worked, trained, responded together. We're comfortable with the arrangement". Most of the equipment is new with the major investment made in their new department just 10 years ago. "One of the more well-to-do communities", the Town is able to fully fund the department, although volunteers some small fundraising on their own.

Pouch Cove established its volunteer fire department in 1975, five years after the Town was incorporated. The department has 17-19 active members, including a Council liaison. This year the Town signed a Mutual Aid Agreement for backup with the Town of Torbay, which has a 10-15 minute response time compared to

PCSP volunteer fire fighter Shawn Ennis getting 1942 pumper ready for July 1<sup>st</sup>.

the 30 min or more required to travel from St. John's. "St. John's is too far away," suggests one representative "especially if the roads or traffic are bad". A good distance for sharing, he adds, is 5 km, St. John's is 25 km. "Response time is the big thing, that plus the costs whether they come or not, we don't use them... We were fine with paying the cost when it was agreed they were needed." The Pouch Cove department cannot respond with its pumper to other communities, although it did before they sold their old one, but has a good working relationship with the Torbay department. Nonetheless both departments have a paramedic among their volunteers. The Town also takes advantage of a certified trainer in Torbay and contributed funds along with Torbay, Portugal Cove-St. Philips and Logy Bay-Outer Cove-Middle Cove to create drawings and a proposal for a training smokehouse. A committee was set up to work on establishing the smokehouse in a central location on Bauline Line. The committee was unsuccessful in getting the Province to agree to cost-share the facility. "The nearest one is on O'Leary Avenue in St. John's and we have to pay and bring our own equipment, which means our pumper is out of the community for training. But the government wouldn't come on side."

The one-year trial agreement with Torbay came without a cost. "When you charge you get into liability so they just said they'd come if they can." The Town owns its own "jaws of life" equipment for car accidents and does pay its 911 fee. It also provides service to the neighbouring community of Bauline. Annual fees are based on the percentage of the total population in each community and last year's operating costs for the department. Bauline pays approximately 17% of the cost, \$5000-6000 in 2004. Torbay has a similar arrangement with Flatrock (for a fee of \$30,000-34,000 per year). There's no written agreement. "It's just an understanding. It's been in place a long time."

According to City managers the SJRFD will not respond if either of the two communities call for assistance. Director Dwyer confirms he has specific, written orders from the Board not to send any equipment. "It sounds cruel, but essentially we're running a business." It's a risk these municipalities have decided to accept. In an emergency situation such as a forest fire where a state of emergency has to be invoked, they point out, provincial Emergency Measures will enable the Towns to harness the resources needed to respond. "If we need specialized equipment such as high angle we can call the Fire Commissioner and they'll come."

Chief Dwyer expects that these Towns will see their insurance rates rise as a result of their decision. Communities currently receive credit for factors such as access to specialized equipment and pumping capacity. "Without the resources of the City of St. John's they may not get that credit anymore."

### *Outlying Areas*

Still other communities were never part of the regional system. Bay Bulls/Witless Bay and Conception Bay Central (Holyrood and area) lie on the southern and western outskirts of the region and were never served (check?) by the St. John's regional fire system. Both areas have moved towards the formation of their own (sub)regional systems.

Witless Bay together with Bay Bulls and the LSDs of Mobile, Burnt Cove, Bauline, St. Michaels, and Tors Cove have had a joint Fire Dept. in place since 1986. "It was natural," says Clerk Geraldine Caul. "They have never had a fire service in the smaller centres". The Town of Witless

Bay administers the services and bills each community quarterly based on a per household fee. Committees are in place in LSDs to collect fees. Newer areas don't have a committee for collection so residents just come into the office to pay. A new Regional Fire Committee has been set up to allow communities to have a say in the services. "They have just been set up and had a few meetings".

The communities of CBC are also realizing that they need to come together. With six sets of infrastructure and an aging population they are likely to eventually be one town and "might as well look at cooperation... They realize the benefit of working together to develop regional services themselves rather than the Province coming in and telling them how to do it." CBC communities began 4-5 years ago with quarterly Mayors meetings. The meetings rotate between Towns, each taking turns to manage logistics and sponsor an after-meeting reception. Next the group agreed to participate in a regional fire services study. They agreed to the study two years ago and have now completed Phase One, identifying what resources each community has. Phase Two will make recommendations for how the new joint department should be structured. Some sharing is already occurring in the region. Conception Harbour for example is home to seasonal workers and consequently loses many of its volunteers. Without any formal agreement, Avondale comes if there is a fire in Conception Harbour. "It's just a given."

Experiences on the Northeast Avalon highlight the difficulty in reaching fair financial arrangements between communities in a shared service and stress the importance of information, dialogue about what is fair and the perception that one is not out to profit from another. "We're not making money here," explains Dwyer "we're just breaking even."

Having the Northeast Avalon Joint Council as a venue for dialogue and cooperation provided considerable assistance in the 2002-2004 debate over fees for backup services. The Joint Council brought in Fire Chief Mike Dwyer to present the SJRFD proposal and reasons for the change, along with an insurance agency (IAO) representative to explain the insurance implications, including a warning that rates could rise as much as \$100 on a \$100,000 property without the SJRFD or equivalent service. Potential for litigation was also discussed. The services of a lawyer were obtained and with this assistance agreements were reached with many of the communities. Others had the benefit of legal advice and the opinions of others in making their decision to opt out of the Regional Service.

"The economies of scale are in training and specialized equipment", suggests one municipal representative. Special equipment like, Hazmat vehicles (\$100,000+) and suits (\$5000 each), ropes for cliff rescue at \$5/ft and ladder trucks are expensive and not feasible for every department to purchase, particularly when the Regional Service responds to only 3-4 high angle and one helicopter rescue per year. Further, specialized training adds what some argue is an unrealistic demand on volunteers members. Another possible savings is in administration. "Fire departments are unique, points out one City manager, "almost every station is self-sufficient, its infrastructure has to act on its own. The only difference is the layers of management. You need some supervision but not top layers in every station."

The existence of a central well-equipped regional service provides support even for the mutual aid agreements that have made between communities outside of the service area. While Torbay



provides backup service to neighbouring communities, for example SJRFD points out, “if Torbay is called to Bauline they call us to respond if need be, or if there truck is getting serviced”. Dwyer advises caution for communities signing on to Mutual Aid Agreements. “The biggest risk they have is when they leave they leave their own citizens at risk.” Departments must also be aware of new legislation (C45) and standards (NFPA1710) for both volunteer and paid departments. Such standards are voluntary but may be held up in court.

### 5. Northeast Avalon Joint Council

The Northeast Avalon Council is an informal gathering of 19? municipal representatives to deal with issues of common interest. Representatives could not recall the year it was launched but guess that it was in the 1970s. Today the Council includes the 17? communities of Zone 19 as well as Witless Bay and Bay Bulls, which asked to participate. “One community may say they have a problem and we’ll discuss it, see if anyone has any suggestions or if we can get together and solve it. It’s addressing a problem collectively”. Each town is given a chance to raise issues of concern to them, whether it be how to handle car wrecks or fire protection. Rather than being a legal entity or a form of regional government the Council is a forum for dialogue, sharing experiences and new initiatives. “It keeps me in the know about the issues of the region. If it comes up in other communities it will come up here. It’s a great learning tool. I can then brief Council and sometimes head off problems. Some of the greatest ideas come from the smallest communities,” says one City of Mount Pearl representative. In turn small communities credit the City for providing them with support and advice. An elected official adds, “it gives you an avenue to vent. You know you’re not alone.” Another notes a similar role for NLFM on the provincial scale and also as a facilitator of regional meetings. A recent NLFM regional meeting was held with Avalon municipal leaders and MHAs.

The Joint Council is also a vehicle for policy and advocacy. One of the issues members face, for example, is fights with government over reductions in funding. Another was the entry of a new communications carrier into the region (Sprint) who, unlike their competitors, was not willing to pay municipal taxes for their use of the airways. Mount Pearl and Paradise decided to launch a lawsuit and all Joint Council members contributed. It took 2-3 years but the Council was successful and member municipalities are now reaping the benefits. The Council has also provided support for requests to improve cellular telephone service in the Pouch Cove area. “We’re a big group and have a lot of power if we use it properly.”

The Joint Council has also played a facilitating role with regional service provision. The Council has identified criteria for regional services<sup>3</sup> and assisted with fire protection negotiations, as discussed above. Through the Joint Council it was also suggested that a City of St. John’s representative organize information and discussion meetings on costing when tipping fees increased. Recognizing that the group has more of an information and advocacy role and limited time for planning in their monthly meetings, the Council also approached CCDA to assist with planning for regional services. “It’s the future of municipal government in the Province, some form of regional cooperation. We can’t afford not to. Areas with joint councils are the genesis”.

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<sup>3</sup> Services should be delivered regionally if they can be provided more efficiently, effectively and economically on a regional basis than by individual municipalities and by agreement from the Province and participating municipalities (Mount Pearl 1997).

Mount Pearl CAO Gerard Lewis, a procedures expert, was tasked with drafting a constitution and bylaws for the group in the early 1990s. Interview responses suggest that the Council is achieving the aims and objectives its constitution sets out: to act as a lobby group, to undertake tasks such as the investigation of new methods of service delivery and promotion of shared services, to entertain presentations on issues of concern and to act as an information forum. A 2003 amendment to the Council's bylaws makes all staff and Councillors of member municipalities ex-officio Joint Council members. All are encouraged to participate but voting is restricted to elected officials, with a maximum of two votes per municipality. The bylaws provide flexibility for different forms of administration, which has been useful as various approaches have been experimented with. Initially whoever hosted the meeting did the minutes, but it got to the point where there was no continuity and it was sometimes difficult to find anyone to do the job. Next the elected President (one year term) provided a staff person, but this discouraged small communities with limited staff resources from stepping up to the Chair. Smaller communities could look at both of the first two alternatives as an unfair burden and an advantage to the larger ones. In 2005 a third approach is being attempted, with a member volunteering to serve as Secretary (Sandra Biggs, Deputy Mayor CBS) and Walter Butt, Deputy Mayor of Pouch Cove as Chair.

## 6. Planning

Significant municipal planning expertise and staff resources have been developed in the Northeast Avalon in recent years. Enhanced municipal planning capabilities have led to a collaborative approach to planning for the region significantly different from that of the 1970s. Until recently only St. John's, Mount Pearl and Paradise had planners. In the past two to three years Portugal Cove-St. Philips, Conception Bay South, Torbay and Pouch Cove have added planners to their staff. Together they have launched a new form of collaboration in the region, the Northeast Avalon planner's group, or municipal planning director's meetings. The group is still relatively new and informal in structure. They met twice in the last year but hope to increase the frequency of their meetings in the future. "It's too early to get more formal but there is a desire to meet on a more regular basis." The biggest challenge has been finding the time with already heavy workloads. No minutes are taken at this point. The vision is a rotating lunch.

A Newfoundland chapter of the Canadian Planning Institute has also been formed. All but two of the chapter's 27-28 members reside in the Northeast Avalon so planners meet fairly regularly in this forum as well. Chapter members work in municipal and provincial government and in consulting.

The planner's group gathers to discuss issues of common concern. Barry Carroll, Manager of Portugal Cove-St. Philips observes that in the past year the group has gained more focus on the region's prime issue, the pressures of growth. Mount Pearl City Planner Stephen Yewczyk agrees. "In the last year we began to really see these issues affecting planners in this region." Because all these towns are dealing with similar issues, the group is trying to develop similar methods and policies for addressing them. "We're seeing what other towns are doing and taking the best and incorporating it into our community. Other towns have already been through this transition, from rural to rural with some urban style development".

It's a lot easier, members of the group suggest, if similar policies are developed. "Our municipalities butt up against one another. It doesn't make sense to the resident if the rules are different on one side of the street than the other." A further concern is competition between municipalities fostered by planning differences. "Where we are in close proximity, it makes full sense to have common approaches. Otherwise firms will play one against the other, 'I can get this is Paradise, why are you being difficult?' The region is small and developers prefer consistency and uniformity in standards.

One specific issue tackled by the group was encroachment on power easements by sheds or other accessory buildings. The Group met with the Province and Newfoundland Light and Power to come up with a common approach. The parties also discussed a process for compliance letters. Issues to be addressed in the future include common fee structures (assessments, development fees, service levies) and allocation of open space. Under current regulations a minimum of 10% of residential subdivision land must be granted to the municipality or cash in lieu provided. Some have a recreation fee toward playground equipment. Different formulas are used so members are seeking to understand how others calculate these charges. But from one St. John's manager's perspective the meetings have a long way to go to address these issues "the lunches are more general stuff, more educational than functional (integration of planning). We've discussed CMHC sustainable communities, the Churchill Square study. It's all very broad". Nevertheless the will is there. "As planners coordination, integration and optimizing use of resources is what we're all about," says Yewczyk.

Day-to-day relationships in the region are also important. "Its an informal relationship ... We make contact when something is happening close to other boundaries, such as expanding the quarries in Foxtrap". But a topic that has required formalized agreements between municipalities is planning for the protection of existing and future water supply areas. Windsor Lake, one of two sources of supply for the City of St. John's (see also Water supply below), lies partly within the boundaries of Portugal Cove-St. Philips and Paradise. "There is shared jurisdiction but we have final say in any development. Our object is to prevent any intensive development, which is sensitive with Portugal Cove-St. Philips and Paradise. Whenever a development application is made in the watershed we have to be consulted and have a statutory right to refuse, or we may recommend to Council that they approve... There's pressure to extend those areas but we've resisted", explains Chief Commissioner Ron Penney. For the most part applications are referred between planning staff.

Windsor Lake supply sign

In 1989 and again in 1997 formal watershed agreements were developed between the City of St. John's and Town of Paradise. The 1997 agreement describes the types of development allowed in the watershed area and under what conditions, establishes standards for existing buildings and a process for dealing with future applications. The Town must inform the City of all application approvals and refusals in the watershed area and refer the application to the City where there is a question of compliance. The agreement also lays out a water quality sampling program.

Another issue discussed at the planning director's meetings has been the need for a new St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan. The feeling within the group was that the plan was long overdue for revision and updating and should be a provincial priority. Then, in Jan. 2005, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs announced he would be seeking input from Northeast Avalon municipalities in a review of the 1976 Plan. By reviewing the plan government aims to assist the area to meet future growth potential, including economic growth and tourism planning. In addition, the Plan will address municipal infrastructure to meet future residential, industrial and commercial needs (NL 2005).

The need for planning in the areas immediately surrounding the urban core led to the formation of the Province's first formalized regional governance structure in the 1960s. The Province established the St. John's Metropolitan Area and Area Board in 1963 to provide planning control and service delivery in the unserved areas surrounding the City of St. John's and the then Town of Mount Pearl. The Metropolitan Area originally extended to the built up areas of Portugal Cove, Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove and southern Torbay. In 1976 the Area was expanded west to Holyrood, south to Witless Bay and east to include Bell Island. The Metropolitan Area, together with St. John's and Mount Pearl, was coined the St. John's Urban Region and the region's first policy document guiding development and land use was developed (the St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan). Due to the importance of the region to provincial interests coupled with limited municipal planning capabilities the Province played a major role in developing the first plan. "The government put it together using consultation rather than full involvement". This time, with increased local capacity and expectations for involvement, the approach being taken is quite different.

The Province approached the municipalities in January 2005 asking them to cost share the new plan on a 50/50 basis and to join a special purpose group to develop the plan. The plan is expected to take two years to complete and cost \$500,000, with the 50% municipal contribution to be based on population size and paid over a two-year period. Each agency who contributes funds will be part of a master committee. Sub-committees will also be established. The 15 municipalities of the Urban Region are still discussing the issue but most have agreed to participate. It is expected that the planning director's group will form the municipal component of a technical advisory committee to the process.

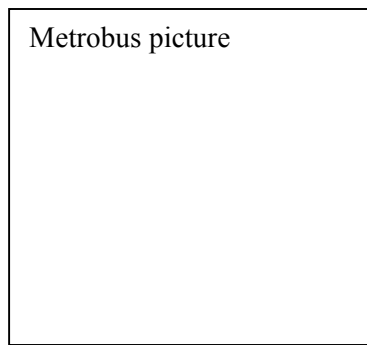
### 7. Public Transit

The St. John's Transportation Commission (Metrobus) was established by the Province to serve the City of St. John's with bus service in the 1950s. It was not until the 70s/80s (?) that Mount Pearl joined the system. Mount Pearl CAO Gerard Lewis explains, "We have entered into a contractual relationship with the Commission whereby we pay a negotiated annual rate per km for bus services within our City. It is integrated with St. John's service. So it's seamless to the passenger whether they're in Mount Pearl or St. John's".

Both parties agree upon specified routes. "If we want to add more routes we can", explains one Councillor, "because we pay for every kilometre (km). The number of kms travelled in Mount Pearl is charged each time the bus leaves the compound to do an approved route in the municipality". Calculated by schedule, the operating cost is \$3/km. Any fees collected on those routes are deducted from the km charge. The municipality pays the net costs, in the end

subsidizing \$2-3 for every \$1 paid by riders. Contracts are negotiated annually. The Commission sets the price, charging the same rate to both Cities. The service currently costs the City of Mount Pearl \$550-560,000 per year.

The service works well but still comes up every election says Mount Pearl Councillor Ed Grant. Residents who use the service, primarily students and low-income residents according to user studies, want more routes and times. The City has looked at several options over the years. Routes have been revamped, removing minor streets and adding new routes to developing areas. The potential for an independent system with smaller buses and more frequent routes was examined but an arrangement couldn't be worked out with the Transportation Commission for taking riders into St. John's without having to pay twice (once to each system). Nor would they guarantee compatible schedules. Transfers were not considered an acceptable solution, so the status quo remained.



The City of Mount Pearl considers it a very good arrangement “because we do not have to go out and buy the buses and the infrastructure costs that would go with it”. Steps have been taken to make the Metrobus more efficient and responsive and City representatives offer “the highest praise” for the service. “Its professionally run and we have an excellent relationship.” The only sore point they suggest is that the City of Mount Pearl asked to be part of the Commission in the early 1990s. “Metrobus should look at disbanding and becoming an Avalon system,” one representative suggests. As part owners rather than service buyers the City would

get a refund on federal taxes. The benefits of not having the responsibility or capital costs of running the service are seen to offset this minor point and the fact that the service is provided but not run regionally. A comprehensive study of the City of Mount Pearl's transit needs and changing demographics was done in 1995. Ten years later the need for another study has been identified. A lot of the community's young people have left while the personal costs of transportation have risen. Other communities such as Paradise and CBS would like to have bus service but haven't given the issue serious consideration at this point.

### 8. Purchasing

Provincial school boards, health boards and municipalities are all eligible to participate in the provincial purchasing system. The system works by each agency sending in a list of their needs every 1-2 years. The Provincial Tendering Authority then calculates the Province's total requirements and tenders for this bulk amount. As a result all participants are intended to get premium pricing. Part of the system for a long time, Portugal Cove-St. Philips purchases cutting edges and pays ¼ of going rate, saving thousands of dollars each winter, suggests Manager Barry Caroll. Freight costs are also decreased because the edges are shipped in bulk. The Town also purchases items such as chlorine and chlorine test meters, fuel, grease, oil, antifreeze, paint, paper, filing cabinets and other furniture, pipe, tires, plumbing, electrical and janitorial supplies, batteries, lumber and more through the system. “A lot of towns wouldn't consider this service sharing but we consider it an important sharing of service... We save a lot of money this way. A lot of municipalities don't even know about it or don't take advantage of it. The more that participate the bigger the quantity and the better the prices.” CBS and Paradise also use the

service regularly. Paradise purchases culverts, materials for snowplows such as cutting edges, and plumbing supplies. They find they do better on their own tender for salt and sand, however (\$58/ton vs. 65). With a salt and sand budget of about \$400,000 per year the savings, in this case from opting out of the provincial process, are significant.

The City of St. John's, however, does its own buying, citing problems with the provincial tendering process such as ... (get details or drop?).

## 9. Recreation

Many recreation facilities in the Northeast Avalon are used by residents of more than one municipality. Other new facilities are being discussed as population growth in areas surrounding the City of St. John's have lead to pressure for improved recreation services. Shared recreation facilities are being examined as a possible solution.

The City of St. John's constructed an \$18 million stadium (Mile One) that is visited by residents from across the Province. The City had no residency requirements for its recreation facilities and programs. Their youth exchange to Portugal, for example, often involves participants from outlying communities that have participated in the City's summer youth programs.

The Sunshine Rotary Park, owned by Rotary and City of St. John's, was originally carved out of the St. Philips area for addition to the St. John's boundary. Portugal Cove-St. Philips residents, therefore frequent the Park. The Sunshine Rotary Park committee, a standing Committee of City Council includes representatives from the City, the Rotary and the Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philips. The Town is now contributing dollars for capital infrastructure for improvements planned by the committee. Town of Portugal Cove-St. Philips representatives feel, however, that additional shared recreation services are premature for them. "We need our own basic recreation services before we can share with others. The Town has about 1900 kids under 19 and nothing for them to do after school. We need something here. Residents have strongly voiced the need for a facility within a five-minute drive. We're looking at gym with fitness and meeting facilities, library, walking track, day care as a base facility serving all ages. After that we might look at sharing something like an arena, facilities that aren't for all ages."

For Paradise recreation is "a big can of worms". The Town is in the midst of a recreation review. Citizens are pushing for recreation facilities such as a stadium and a pool but as Director of Operations Rick Appleby points out, not every community needs or can afford a stadium. Staff and Council conducted a study six months ago to look at the feasibility of sharing facilities with CBS and Mount Pearl, resulting in some initial informal discussion. For now the Town is working on clearly identifying their own priorities and will figure out how to meet them after. A planned cost-shared multi-purpose facility with Portugal Cove-St. Philips fell through when "they couldn't come up with their part of the funding" (or decided to focus on a facility of their own as discussed above). Paradise had planned to run the facility and charge user fees. Given the Town's debt load Appleby suggests, "we'll have to look at sharing recreation facilities, or wait a long time".

Mount Pearl has a significant array of recreation facilities but the demographic of the City's residents are changing. "In order to offer access to our residents we may need to offer access to

younger families in neighbouring communities, offering an integrated service not only to the citizens of Mount Pearl but also to the citizens of adjoining communities. With our swimming pool, priority is given to our residents but in order to fulfill that we let them come from wherever. We have a facility to operate and it makes no sense to exclude anybody because the costs are the same and if someone is coming in and paying their registration, whether they're from Mount Pearl or ... as long as you don't jeopardize the service to our residents it makes sense to extend it to others".

Torbay is also conducting a feasibility study on the construction of an arena or multiplex. They contacted neighbouring communities and Bauline, Flatrock and Logy Bay-Outer Cove-Middle Cove indicated a wish to participate. The concept is that the towns would partner and contribute to construction and operating costs. This year Torbay's emphasis is on getting all of their roads paved. Next year dollars will be invested in a soccer pitch. Soccer is the community's biggest sport with 400 children participating currently and continued growth expected. Soccer is a shared activity in St. John's East. Torbay's soccer committee works with neighbouring communities such as Outer Cove while Pouch Cove residents often travel to Flatrock to use their soccer facilities. The Town of Torbay is considering approaching the school about using their gym as a community recreation facility rather than building a second facility.

Municipal enforcement authority on and recreational use of railway beds has become a hot issue in the region. After being raised at the Joint Council a subcommittee on ATVs has been formed that includes the communities of CBS, Pouch Cove and Mount Pearl. Mount Pearl has indicated a willingness to take on enforcement responsibility. The City previously had two enforcement staff and has increased that to five. "We are discussing with the Province, St. Johns, Mount Pearl, Paradise and CBS for lease, ownership and enforcement options for the T-Railway that runs through all of our communities and for T-Railway passes. A big problem we have had in the past is the enforcement of properties we do not own. So we're trying to negotiate a lease and the enforcement would become our responsibility." The idea is still in the exploratory stages. The Province currently enforces the railway bed through park officers but is short-staffed. St. John's and Mount Pearl does not permit motorized traffic on the railway. "We primarily want it for walking, biking and cross country skiing, those sorts of leisure activities... The idea is to lease the land for \$1 and we would take over the maintenance and enforcement responsibilities. We wouldn't charge our residents fees for use. Our taxpayers would fund the cost as part of our open space and playing field areas". Mount Pearl puts staff on ATVs to patrol the areas but does not groom them. "Associations typically do that where there is ATV use". Paradise and CBS allow both motorized and non-motorized recreational uses of the railway bed for now. Neither has made a final decision on their policy. CBS Councillor Marie DC (?) explains "We decided about five yrs ago to take over railway put up signs non-motorized only. The government said we couldn't do that and to take the signs down. We approached them again and in 2004 they said they were willing to lease the trail to CBS with conditions, each one involving spending money. We'd be responsible for enforcement, maintenance, signage, liability. We're waiting for legislation from Govt Services. There is also an expectation for public consultation on the use of the railway. We have to go through the process. We can't just sign the lease and ban motorized vehicles"

## 10. Sewage treatment/harbour cleanup

The major drainage basin of the region is the Waterford River. Storm and sanitary sewage flows through a trunk sewer from what is now urban Paradise down the Waterford River Valley to Mount Pearl and ultimately into St. John's harbour. The Province decided in the 1970s that they would build a line for sewage disposal up the river valley. The Province built the infrastructure and each of the three communities has paid an annual fee to the Province ever since. The same pipe will deliver municipal wastewater to a new treatment facility being constructed as part of the St. John's Harbour Cleanup Project. The Project will provide for a primary treatment sewage system and stop the dumping of 120 million litres of untreated sewage flow into the Harbour each day. The municipalities initiated the process in concert with the Atlantic Canada Action Program (ACAP). ACAP pushed to have the harbour cleaned up and "managed to keep it on the hot seat" with the municipal leaders.

The project is expected to take 5-6 yrs to complete but has gotten off to a slow start. "We started to collect extra on water tax 4-5 years ago in St. John's and the others make an annual budget contribution". Together the municipalities put together a submission and went after infrastructure dollars, starting with some small capital projects undertaken as Phase One of the Project beginning in 1998. The three municipalities met to come up with an agreement to cost share one-third of the cost to complete the Project (projected at \$90-100 million for Phase Two), then went to the Province, then to the federal government for a third each, which all parties agreed to do. The agreed upon fee structure for municipalities (for both capital contributions and projected operating costs) is based on flow. Since it has yet to be determined how much actual flow each municipality will contribute to the system design flow/effluent estimates are based on population.

The federal government announced its support in November 2002 but it was not until late 2003/early 2004 that a 29-page contribution agreement was put in place between all three parties to create the new system. "Working with the other municipalities has been OK but the federal and provincial governments have been difficult. The federal is bureaucracy slow, and there is always different people to deal with". Problems began with getting contribution agreement signed. After reviewing the contract proposed by the federal government the municipalities pushed for changes. The agreement wording suggested a federal contribution of \$31 million but no more for Phase Two of the Project, with no allowance for cost overruns. "The federal government wanted to steamroll everybody," but in the end the changes were made (?) and the agreement signed. (Run this paragraph by Geraldine.)

Then came the financing for the municipal portion of the project. Loan financing was approved through the Green Municipal Investment Fund in October 2004. The City finally received an agreement in Feb. 2005. "When we received it our legal department looked it over and determined we couldn't sign. It was a generic agreement and we need some changes made. It also had huge reporting requirements... We said we wouldn't sign and they said we had to. It's now May and we've asked them to come and meet with us, and to bring someone with the authority to make adjustments. We haven't heard back on our request". The process remains stalled in negotiations.

Despite these difficulties construction of the system is now underway. Phase One of the project is complete, including:



- collection, redirecting and screening sewage flows from the Waterford Valley drainage basin
- a diffused outfall on the south side of the Harbour
- construction of the pumping station on Southside Road (St. John's 2005)

Phase Two is underway, with the clearing of the treatment plant area on the south side of the harbour.

The resulting wastewater treatment infrastructure will be owned by the City of St. John's. There is no legislation in place at this point, just the funding agreement. The City of Mount Pearl has called for legislation to formally adopt the proposed governance structure. The City of St. John's drafted a future governance model, which was accepted in 2003. The management committee once the treatment facility is up and running is to include five people, three from the City, one from Mount Pearl, and one from Paradise with the Chair a member of St. John's Council. Some representatives expect that sewage and water will become one board. Without legislation in place the Board structure may yet change. Despite the challenges encountered along the way sharing between the three levels of government has been a necessity in coming up with an improved sewage system for the region's urban core. "We wouldn't have gone out and borrowed \$93 million on our own. Taxes would have to go up \$400 per person".

The Contribution Agreement establishes a Committee to manage and implement the Agreement. This initial management Committee includes two appointed representatives from each of the Government of Canada, the Province and the municipalities. The City of St. John's is responsible for the day to day running of the construction project and the awarding of tenders after consultation with a second interim construction committee established by the three municipalities.

### 11. Snow clearing

In one area within the City of St. John's, Circle Square Ranch, it is more efficient and cost-effective for CBS to provide snow-clearing services than for St. John's to move its equipment to this location. For the past two winters CBS has cleared the roads to the ranch and billed the City at an hourly rate totalling \$3-5000 per year.

Pouch Cove Deputy Mayor Walter Butt suggests there may be potential in the future for sharing services like salt and sand and ice control in the St. John's East area. Municipalities can currently store 300 tonnes at the highways depot but he expects that to change. If it does the communities may want to establish their own central depot.

### 12. Waste disposal

Robin Hood Bay waste disposal site, located off the TransCanada Highway east of St. John's was opened in the 1950s by the US military. In 1963 the site was turned over to the City of St. John's for use by the City and neighbouring communities. Portugal Cove, St. Philips and Mount Pearl began using the site in the 1970s. Paradise was mandated by the Province to do the same. Pouch Cove closed their landfill in the 1980s and turned to Robin Hood Bay. CBS closed their landfill in the early-mid 1990s, encouraged by the Province. CBN (Carbonnear, Harbour Grace) also started using the Robin Hood Bay facility recently after shutting down their old incinerator.

City Chief Commission Ron Penney describes the arrangement, “It’s totally internal. We determine the costs per ton of garbage and bill everyone accordingly including ourselves”. The current tipping fee per ton is \$23.50. Each town collects its own garbage and has a permit to dump. Trucks are weighed as they arrive and each municipality is billed by City of St. John’s monthly. Charges are based on an annually approved tonnage.

Picture of landfill

The rate has stayed fairly stable with the exception of a jump in (yr)? from \$12 to \$23 to account for the increased costs of landfill cover, required for gull management. “We weren’t doing it properly, weren’t covering for gull management at the airport”. The results, according to Penney have been disappointing, “We’ve done the covering but it hasn’t reduced the gulls”. Some frustration was expressed with the timing of the change: “We were paying \$12 but that doubled 4-5 years ago after we’d completed a contract with our contractor and done our budget.” “We don’t really care about how it is operated. Once it’s gone it’s not a problem, unless costs go up,” explains one municipal representative. When requested the City will meet with municipalities to discuss information regarding the landfill’s operations and finances. When fees were raised City staff were asked to attend a meeting of the Joint Council to explain.

Overall representatives report no real challenges with Robin Hood Bay up to this point. It is considered a good level of service at a reasonable cost. The new challenge is the significant changes recommended for waste management in the region by the Greater Avalon Regional Waste Management Committee and the desire by the municipalities to encourage recycling, but at significant costs.

#### *Greater Avalon Regional Waste Management*

The Greater Avalon Regional Waste Management Committee was formed in June 2003 following on the adoption of a new Provincial Waste Management Strategy in 2002. The Strategy established 15 Regional Waste Management Regions across the Province, promised to phase out unlined landfills (including Robin Hood Bay) and to reduce waste going to landfills by 50% by 2010. The Committee’s mission was to plan for a new integrated, environmentally responsible waste management system in the region (Regular 2004). The Committee consists of 15 members from municipalities, provincial government, industry and the environmental sector including municipal representatives from the Towns of Arnold’s Cove, Harbour Grace, Clarenville, Placentia, Conception Bay South, Ferryland and Avondale, Cities of St. John’s and Mount Pearl along with Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities and Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Municipal Administrators.

The proposed system includes a materials recovery facility, commercial indoor composting operation and engineered landfill with a network of six transfer stations throughout the Avalon Peninsula. A new regional waste management site at Dog Hill, west of the Foxtrap Interchange and three kilometres south of the Trans Canada Highway, is recommended (NL 2004a). Robin Hood Bay would continue to be a primary (collection) site along with smaller ones such as Bay

Bulls, but the provincial government has come out with standards that must be met in order to continue to utilize these sites. Overall the cost of the system is estimated at \$40 million.

The City wants to continue to use Robin Hood Bay site. Other communities agree that, “for us it makes sense to extend the use of St. John’s landfill. It’s a lower rate so we want to make it last”. City of St. John’s and The Province, under a new government, jointly funded a study in 2004 to look at options for retrofitting Robin Hood Bay to meet new standards and incorporating the existing site into the new strategy. “We think it can be done because of where it is and how it naturally drains. Reduce production, add a non-porous cover, cut groundwater and put in a collection facility that will treat leachate at the sewage treatment facility. But we’re stymied. We need the Province to agree. Now the Department of Environment is doing a study of the study!” The Minister has called for a peer review of the 2004 study by the environmental consulting firm AMEC to examine the significant differences between findings in the two studies that have been completed.

The City cites economic and technical reasons for their position and suggests it is too soon to go the stage of public consultation for the Dog Hills site. “We support a second site being identified and prepared but Robin Hood Bay can last another 35-40 years... There are technical questions. Avalon Waste wants to set up a technical committee but we want to wait. We’re the only ones with the technical expertise in running a disposal facility and we don’t think there’s been enough work done on the site, there’s no evidence that the technical work has been done. There’s no point to public consultation now”.

“It’s a big economic issue. The system would pay for shipping and St. John’s would be subsidizing shipping from far away. A new landfill would be hugely expensive and there would be costs to close down Robin Hood Bay. The former government adopted a new plan without identifying how much money and where it would come from. Dog Hill will cost \$40 million plus decommissioning Robin Hood Bay. We can bring up Robin Hood Bay for much less”. Another town representative worries, “on the mainland where they have state-of-the-art facilities tipping fees are up to \$100/ton”. Tipping fees for the new system are projected at \$53-63 per ton, more than double the existing rate.

Municipal representatives await a decision one way or another so they can proceed with waste management in their communities.

### *Recycling*

A difference of opinion also exists between the City of St. John’s and Avalon Waste over approaches to recycling. Avalon Waste suggests a two-stream scheme that, according to a City study on waste diversion, requires more sorting and construction of a plant. The City proposal is a three-stream system. Delays in implementing the new regional waste system are delaying implementation of recycling in the City of St. John’s. “We wanted to bring in three-stream collection and do it at Robin Hood Bay, but what’s the point if it’s going to be closed in five years and a two-stream system introduced. That would confuse people. It takes time to adjust to change....”

The provincial government is attempting to promote recycling through the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB). “When you can reduce tonnage by up to 70% its prudent to recycle,” says one municipal leader. Yet technology and cost are frequently cited barriers.

Several MMSB pilot projects are underway in the region. The City of Mount Pearl generates 10,000 metric tons of household garbage each year (confirm with Jim). Of this 600-800 tons is white metals and tires. Through an MMSB contractor a service is now available to pick these items up at the household. The City is also moving to curbside fibre collection in October 2005 and expects to divert 1200 more tons/year. While it is a pilot project for the City it is a long-term commitment. The truck and equipment alone will cost almost \$500,000. The fibre will be picked up in clear bags along with the household garbage. Bylaws will be changed to make it a mandatory system. “The garbage won’t get collected if you don’t have a bag of recyclables.” The long-term vision is to add plastics as well. The venture will have considerable cost to the City. Revenues are projected at \$10 per ton for paper and the costs at \$23 (double check with Jim).

Portugal Cove-St. Philips is also attempting to recycle “but we’re at the mercy of the recycling depots and markets”. They started with beverage containers and received MMSB funding for a pilot project. The project has been operating now for four years, two as a pilot and two on their own. In attempt to cut costs the Town plans to eliminate that aspect of their operation and may contract-out. Grass is 10-15% of the garbage stream so they’ve eliminated that to save dollars and space. Grass clippings were buried but the site is now filled. “There should be a major composting site and will be at the new facility”.

Torbay began an MMSB pilot project (doing what?) in 2004. MMSB provided equipment and staff and the Town provided \$2000-3000 for expenses. Bauline requested that they also be able to drop their recyclables at the Torbay depot. The Town then decided to write Flatrock and Logy Bay-Outer Cover-Middle Cove offering the same service. The towns are billed by MMSB for use of the facility based on their population.

CBS also had a two-year curbside recycling pilot with 1000 households but couldn’t afford to keep it going after the funding ended. The project cost \$125,000 per year just for the 1000 homes. If the Town continued the program service would have had to be extended to other residents. The Town picked up 2000 tons of recyclables in 2004 and generated only \$10,000 in revenue. A truck capable of picking up both household garbage and recycling can be purchased at a cost of \$250,000 to 300,000.

“Recycling is the biggest challenge”, says one manager, “and it will cost to deal with. The Province will have to mandate if it’s going to happen”.

#### *Hazardous Waste*

CBC held its first regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Avondale in 2004. Their 5% participation rate compared favourably to the typical first time rate of 2% provided to the CCDA by MMSB.

### *Governance*

The majority of municipalities don't care if they participate in the management of the region's waste disposal facility as long as the price is reasonable. But one Council representative feels that as tipping fees rise more towns would like to have some say and would prefer a regional system. The question has arisen as part of discussions about the proposed new site at Dog Hill but "if government agrees that RH Bay will be the landfill site will a regional governance structure be put in place?" Like the location of the site itself the governance issue remains unresolved. A committee has been formed with representative from the City of St. John's and City of Mount Pearl to work on a proposed governance model. "Everyone agreed to the Dog Hill governance model", says one representative, "we should adopt this and move on". "The problem with a regional committee," counters another "is that it is another level of governance and more complex. It takes hours out of your day. You've constantly got to be sensitive". While some smaller communities want a greater say St. John's is also concerned about having a voice commensurate with their population. "If it were to serve to Clarendville we would be outnumbered. Dog Hill is not in our boundaries". "Its a balancing act to keep St. John's from being the odd man out".

### 13. Water supply

The Northeast Avalon regional water supply is legislated under the City of St. John's Act regional services provisions. Bay Bulls Big Pond is a shared water source currently serving the west end of St. John's, Paradise, Mount Pearl, CBS and most recently Portugal Cove-St. Philips. The watershed is within the municipal planning boundaries of the City of St. John's.

The east end of the City of St. John's is supplied by Windsor Lake, a system totally owned and operated by the City. The regional supply was initiated in the 1970s through a study of the Pond's water supply potential. A sophisticated treatment plant with ozone and trace elements of chlorine and the infrastructure were constructed with federal funding and in 1976 the supply was transferred to the St. John's Metropolitan Area Board as a regional service. The Board governed regional services and areas that weren't under municipal boundaries until its dissolution in 1991. At that time the water service was turned over to the City of St. John's to be managed under a formalized legislative provision called the Regional Water Committee.

Under the current structure all members of the St. John's Council are members of this Committee along with the Mayor or designate of other participating municipalities. There is some concern that St. John's controls the authority, with 11:4 representation on the Committee: "St. John's because they are the main player do what they like." But it is generally acknowledged that St. John's has not taken advantage of this position. "To their credit there is usually a couple of representatives from St. John's, a couple from Mount Pearl and one from each of the other municipalities. Even though they have the legislative authority to do so they have not dominated. It works very, very well".

The Committee is a policy board that determines all policies and fees, including the rate at which they sell the water. "The Board meets quarterly, agendas are sent out ahead of time, it has a terms of reference and bylaws ..." Representatives are political leaders but most communities also send their engineers to meetings. Engineers talk about the technical issues while the Committee makes policy and costing decisions for the provision of water to individual municipalities. "We'll sit down and deal with issues, be it planning, capital costs, operational". An annual rate is set based

on operating costs and voted on every Nov/Dec. The total cost is divided by total use to come up with a unit cost and then billing is done using a per L rate (e.g. 15 cents per cu.m./1000 l). Water to each of the municipalities is metered and then everyone is billed monthly for their usage. The City of St. John's does the billing according to an accepted and approved methodology, which is also reviewed on an annual basis. Disputes over the rates can be appealed to the Public Utilities Board for settlement but that has not happened.

Regional water staff, charged with day-to-day operations, are staff of the City of St. John's. The regional system provides the water and then once it gets to the boundary of each municipality distribution and maintenance becomes the responsibility of the individual municipality. The actual pump house, cleansing, chlorination, reservoirs, and major distribution lines are the responsibility of the Committee.

Paradise joined the system in the early 1980s. Portugal Cove-St. Philips began servicing the St. Philips side of their Town in December 2003 "Its 80% rock so the cost of installing water and sewer is high". Supply provided by the Town to the Portugal Cove core "was basically exhausted, limiting development" so Council decided in 2001 to make the investment required, determining that participation in the regional system would be more cost effective than developing a new local supply. The Town started participating in the water committee in 2003 when they started using the supply. Both the Mayor and Superintendent of Public Works attend. "We sent a letter requesting entry and they sent one accepting." The Town observes that recent changes have improved the committee.

Problems arose when the City of St. John's declared water bans on their own without convening the Committee and then called on other municipalities to follow suit. "Our position is that that's not the appropriate way. They have information about the status of the water and did do some initial consultation, but the politicians were saying that it is not a staff matter when we're going out and asking our residents to stop using water. They said 'politically we need to be able to respond in the appropriate way and we should have all come together and made the ban together', not pitting one against the other or one being more proactive in water conservation than the other. It's not good politics" suggests a Mount Pearl representative. CBS Manager Keith Arns adds, "It left us scrambling. People were calling us asking if the ban was in effect here ..."

The water conservation issue led to a review of the current structure, changes some communities describe as a necessity to deal with what they feel is the system's biggest challenge – "St. John's having controlling interest". "We're in the process of redoing the structure and the bylaws. There are new proposals that would see a change in that structure with not so many representatives of the City of St. John's". Members recognize that demographics should give St. John's at least 50% representation but the ratio of 11:4 is considered unreasonable. While it has rarely occurred there have been contested issues on the table where all of St. John's council attended for the vote and then left the meeting. The new proposal is for five members of St. John's City Council, two from Mount Pearl and one each from CBS, Paradise and Portugal Cove-St. Philips.

It is also part of the new draft agreement that no individual municipality can act on policy matters without the approval of the Regional Committee. If there is a water shortage the Committee will get together and decide what measures to take collectively. Decisions must go through the

Regional Water Committee prior to any Council making a policy statement or press release on “cost, use or restrictions to the use of water”. This approach worked well in 2004. “We agreed this year on one joint water conservation order and report so that we’re all saying the same thing”. The review has been drafted and there have been some minor changes made but it is expected the revision will be passed in early 2005 (check status?). “Only time will tell if it works.”

Overall the shared water supply is considered a success, with excellent quality and a price lower than other provinces. Massive infrastructure costs are shared and the system benefits from staff expertise in a time when standards for water quality management are increasing. “Costs went down. We don’t have to buy supplies or maintain a building to chlorinate water. Also the water is a better quality. You can have a range of staff that we could not otherwise have had such as a chemist and an engineer. Resource sharing means it has to work for all parties and it doesn’t always. Sometimes it’s hard to get to the point where it is beneficial for everybody. But it gives you a group of people working towards a common goal and you have more resources at your table. I think the regional water supply is the best example here in this region. Everybody shares in the best water and shares equally in the burden.”

Portugal Cove-St. Philips suggests, “We get better quality at an affordable cost. It’s no more expensive, cheaper if anything and with less worries. It’s a fully professionally run water system, very good control on the water, quality an individual town couldn’t afford. There are some cost savings, there’s quality and there’s peace of mind, something we don’t have to worry about”.

Issues of infrastructure still remain in areas such as Paradise and Portugal Cove. The towns have agreed to pay for what is within their town boundaries but major components (e.g. reservoirs, not local distribution) become part of the regional system. Paradise has reached about 60% servicing but Topsail and 3 Island Pond don’t want services and don’t pay water and sewer.

The Committee will have to look at another water source as population growth continues. The Town of Torbay is currently facing a water challenge and approached the City about the possibility of joining the regional system. The Committee is looking at bringing in more ponds ten years down the road but right now the system doesn’t have the capacity to take on additional partners.

## **Lessons Learned**

### Benefits

Numerous benefits have been realized through the sharing of services in the Northeast Avalon. Given shrinking provincial funding and rising costs municipal leaders suggest there is a need to pool resources, both financial and human, to deliver the highest quality services possible to their residents. When one community saves money in a successful shared arrangement others do as well. “With fire, waste we feel we have made improvements that will benefit everyone. If we save \$1 St. John’s saves \$4”. Through programs such as shared purchasing and regional economic development staff thousands of dollars have been saved each year and programs provided in communities that could not otherwise afford them. Perhaps the biggest savings has

been in physical infrastructure costs, again costs some communities say they simply could not afford. The presence of regional water, transit, waste, sewage, fire and emergency services have meant that not every community has had to make the capital expenditure required to purchase the equipment required. In several cases it has also meant that federal and provincial agencies are more willing to cost-share.

Larger communities providing services to smaller ones (for an agreed upon fee) also relieve administrative duties and liability concerns from municipalities with strained human resources. Says Geraldine King, Manager of Environmental Initiatives for the City of St. John's of negotiating for funds through the Green Municipal Investment Fund "It's OK for us, with legal and financial staff, but I feel sorry for the small municipalities who have to go through this process". Representatives from communities who have contracted with the Regional Fire Department, for example, agree that they are happy to have the responsibility and liability off their shoulders. Understanding the liabilities associated with delivering a service is itself a challenge, impacted by changing standards for service delivery.

Sharing services has also been a way to respond to new standards and policies as they arrive, such as more stringent SPCA standards for animal control facilities, cutbacks in provincial funding for fire services in the 80s and 90s, and increased requirements for water quality and waste management in recent years. Finally, Barry Carroll points out that the relationships among the communities are an achievement themselves. "The positive thing is that that we have been working with other municipalities". By sharing information and talking to one another communities are able to discover best practices and develop compatible policies in neighbouring communities that in turn improve their relationships with their taxpayers.

## Challenges

### *Geography/distance*

While savings can be significant from sharing services, sharing is not always feasible or optimal. Portugal Cove-St. Philips, for example, is "geographically huge" with 80 kms of roads. This makes cooperation more difficult for some services. Carroll says of snow clearing, for example, "We looked at it when we moved from a contract situation to doing it ourselves. We have a lot of roads and they have to be cleared by seven am because people are moving, 85% of the working population commuting to St. John's for work. So we need our own service". Pouch Cove, similarly, notes distance as a barrier for them as potential participants in the regional fire service.

### *Differences in size and power*

The dynamics of small and medium sized communities cooperating with a much larger City is a challenge for the region. "We don't have big clout with the City, although we do share things with them." Governance is a recurring theme in the review of services above. The challenge is to find governance structures that provide everyone a voice while appropriately recognizing demographics and resource contributions of the larger centres. Yet another dynamic only touched on above and by interview respondents is the presence of Local Services Districts and unincorporated areas next to municipalities, in some cases also part of service sharing arrangements. There is considerable diversity among the communities of the Northeast Avalon,



making it sometimes difficult to find the common ground needed for effective decision-making and cooperation.

#### *Reaching a fair financial arrangement*

One of the biggest challenge in shared services is reaching an agreed upon method of sharing the costs of a service. Communication and education have played a significant role in discussions about the costs of providing services and what a fair cost allocation might be on the Northeast Avalon. In case such as water supply, waste disposal and public transit simple fee-for-use structures have worked well. Total costs have been calculated, divided by total units of use and allocated appropriately. Where multiple factors must be considered such as in the case of fire protection the calculations are more complex and difficult to reach agreement on, particularly where reduced provincial funding with increased municipal responsibility has forced the need for cost recovery. Funding challenges were highlighted for many services.

#### *The amalgamation debate*

Like many other areas strong feelings, previous experiences and differences of opinion over the issue of amalgamation represent a challenge for shared services in the Northeast Avalon. For some amalgamation occurred with very little difficulty. CBS, for example, was formed as a voluntary amalgamation of nine communities, first as a Local Improvement District (1971) and soon after as a Town (1973). To this date amalgamation is not considered a major issue or threat for CBS Town Council. Others clearly do not feel the same.

Over the past two decades pressure for amalgamation in the region's urban core has come from two principal sources: the Province and the City of St. John's. The City of St. John's suggests that further amalgamation in the region will eliminate: 1) excessive administration costs and 2) competition within the region. "We should be competing with Halifax instead of each other" suggests CAO Ron Penny. Ecological considerations have also been raised. Watershed management in the Waterford River Basin, it is argued, is fragmented by three separate municipal jurisdictions. Further, the City sees inequities in residents of outlying "bedroom communities" coming to work in St. John's, using City roads, recreation facilities and other services while relying on provincial grants and debt relief to provide their own municipal services (St. John's 1990). Others argue that amalgamation, particularly with St. John's, will have personal, political, technical and financial costs that far outweigh the proposed benefits. Taxes will rise in outlying areas with improvements in service that may not be commensurate they suggest, the priorities of the core taking precedence over the needs of the fringe. Further, communities are concerned about reduced access to politicians and staff by their residents and with loss of community spirit and identity (Paradise 1990, Goulds 1990). Rather than saving money they argue St. John's has taken on communities such as the Goulds and Airport Height at tremendous financial cost (Mount Pearl 1997). Some municipal leaders were suspicious that amalgamation was simply a way of downloading responsibilities from the Province to municipalities, following on similar devolution from federal to provincial levels and forcing municipalities to raise taxes to meet their responsibilities (Paradise 1990).

The City of St. John's has been granted a series of boundary extensions since its incorporation in 1949. A round of amalgamation took place in the region in January 1992, after several hearings on the matter. Goulds and Airport Heights became part of the City of St. John's. St. Thomas,

Elizabeth Park, Thompson Pond, Topsail Pond, and Three Island Pond joined with Paradise and Portugal Cove with St. Philips. The amalgamations brought significant geographic and political change. There had been little cooperation between Portugal Cove and St. Philips, for example, since their incorporation in 1978 and now they were one. ‘Many would have called it a forced amalgamation’, suggests one representative.

Amalgamation, under Premier Clyde Wells, “was the public policy of the day” but Wells did not take things as far in the region as he originally proposed. A 1990 provincial Commission recommended the political landscape of the region be reconfigured from eighteen existing communities into nine new municipal groupings, and later into four. The City of St. John’s conducted a major study that recommended all urban and urbanizing areas come within the City boundaries, forming one single expanded urban core (consultant 1990). The St. John’s proposal met with a storm of resistance. 18,000 Mount Pearl residents signed an opposing petition in one night. With strong resistance from citizens outside of St. John’s, particularly Mount Pearl, and little pressure from the residents of St. John’s the proposal was never implemented.

A series of events followed the 1990 amalgamation debate that Mount Pearl municipal leaders see as punitive measures for their refusal to cooperate with provincial policy and the wishes of their politically powerful neighbour, the City of St. John’s. The Metro Board was dissolved and the regional water supply turned over to the City of St. John’s to be governed by a commission with their majority control. Southlands, an area designated for Mount Pearl urban expansion, was transferred to the City of St. John’s and Mount Pearl was forced to join the regional fire service (discussed above). The twenty-year debate reared its head again in 1997 when Mount Pearl attempted to get Southlands back, convincing newly elected Premier Tobin to appoint a Commissioner to look at the matter. In the end the Province stuck to its decision. In 2001 the City of St. John’s commissioned a review of the amalgamation issue by two of the authors of their 1990 study. They came up with similar findings. After fifteen years positions remain unchanged. Meanwhile the Province’s current policy is that amalgamations will be supported but not forced.

“It’s hanging over us as a region”, suggests a City representative. “It colours our relationship, especially with Mount Pearl and Paradise”. In the City of St. John’s the push for amalgamation is led by Mayor Andy Wells. Municipal representatives suggest that due to his strong position Mayor Wells does not participate in meetings regarding regional services and “won’t have anything to do with” other communities in the region, nor they with him. “It’s generally well recognized that St. John’s is not a big advocate of cooperation, preferring amalgamation. So there’s somewhat of a disconnect at the political level, but we generally get along well at the operational level.”

The issue is awkward for St. John’s senior staff responsible for cooperating with their colleagues to make regional services work. If regional services do work then amalgamation is less likely, contrary to the City’s political objectives. Outside of the City some are not concerned. CBS and Torbay say there is little interest in taking them over and that if the issue did arise it would require discussion. One Paradise representative suggests that while some Councillors are strong on preserving their identity an amalgamation with Mount Pearl may have mutual benefits. “We’ve got land and they’ve got dollars”. Yet a number of communities outside of St. John’s and Mount Pearl feel constrained by the tension associated with the amalgamation issue. “There’s lots

we've talked about as staff but Council doesn't want to talk about it for fear of the amalgamation word," explained a Manager from one urban community while another more rural municipal Councillor stated cautiously, "Regionalization, it's just another word for amalgamation but I'll go along with it for now".

### Success factors

Municipal representatives shared their thoughts on the factors that have led to success in service sharing in their region:

#### *Staff relationships*

Strong working relationships between staff from partnering municipalities are reported to be a critical factor in the success of service sharing. "We tend to try to work things out at the staff level, that's the preliminary stage before elected officials get involved. Elected officials often give us the direction to work out an agreement, then we work it through as staff and then go back to Council again to finalize... Ultimately there's a lot of respect for the City of St. John's and their staff, how they run things" suggests Barry Carroll of Portugal Cove-St. Philips. Gerard Lewis of Mount Pearl adds, "Not a week goes by that someone at the City of Mount Pearl is not in communication with the City of St. John's. It was three times last week for me alone. There's a mutual respect at the staff level". In return St. John's' Ron Penney describes "I know the staff there now pretty well and we try to work things out and have arrangements that benefit both of us". Politicians "do what they have to do" suggest managers but staff work to stay out of the media and try to keep issues "as internal as possible".

#### *Bigger but not a bully - cooperative attitudes*

Another key success factor has been that although St. John's is home to more than 50% of the region's population and has considerable legislative authority over regional services they cooperate with others and generally provide all partnering communities have a voice in decision-making: "Ultimately they're in control, but it doesn't get like that..." "They are the bigger cousin, but we respect them for that. We do get into confrontations, but we try to work through them".

"The larger the partner the more the potential for sharing comes with reluctance", suggests a Mount Pearl representative particularly "if you don't have a good history of working cooperatively with no ulterior motives ..." Being open to but not pushing cooperation, particularly as a larger centre is described as an appropriate approach. "Our philosophy has always been where we can help we will. If you want to broaden that relationship it has to be your call, not ours. We will be receptive to anything but we're not going to initiate the discussions." Mike Arns of CBS further explains the cooperative spirit. "We've always approached our relationships with a positive attitude rather than butting heads with our neighbours."

#### *Leadership*

Leadership in collaboration has come from all levels, from small and large communities and from the Province. "It's a good cooperative big brother, a regional service centre. Without that you need the leadership that sees a benefit". "A lot of it has to do with the attitudes of the people who run the municipalities. There's been moments over the years, but we've been having some

successes.” At the same time City of St. John’s Mayor Wells was described as “the single biggest impediment” to cooperation. The Province, on the other hand, has been a big supporter of service sharing. “The Province’s global theme is cooperation”.

In garnering municipal leadership support “there has to be a realization that you don’t have to give up your identity by sharing services.” “I think it’s a whole philosophical approach to the way you do business. Once you start sharing one it takes away the fear. Some operations, municipalities in particular, can become very parochial, be fearful that if they share services they are going to threaten their longevity or their identity. The more you come to share services it leads to your own security. The benefits of it become quite evident and then it permeates the whole organization. The identity to me is not who provides a service but the level of quality of service and the pride of the individual residents in their community.”

#### *Written agreements – when needed*

For some communities and some services a written agreement has been instrumental, for others they are seen as unnecessarily complex or even more dangerous than an unwritten agreement from a liability perspective (as described above in the case of Torbay’s fire backup services). “You need a written agreement when it has to do with liability and when there’s a contract with money changing hands, and conditions, factors used to arrive at the numbers”. Yet for others “We’ve talked about a written agreement for fire backup but that makes it more complicated. We all have our own. If it works well why fix it? Water is totally different. It’s a larger cost, delivered by one main entity. You’re dependent. You need to be able to rely on the supply”.

#### *Looking for the win-win – one size does not fit all*

Leaders suggest that the key to a good service-sharing partnership is mutual benefit. “It’s just common sense. You have to look at the pros and cons of going on your own. It’s the same cost for St. John’s whether we’re in or out, so it’s a win-win...” A regional services manager adds “We not in it for a profit. We just break even.” “We’ve found it has worked great as long as the larger department doesn’t incur significant costs to serve other communities”.

While municipal representatives acknowledge the Province for its support of regional service delivery they fear that the need for different approaches in different areas will be lost in the desire for a “one size fits all” solution. Every service has to be evaluated for an individual community or region before it can be determined if service sharing makes sense. “There are so many different examples of what will work. Some things are beneficial for us and some things are not. But what works for us may not work for Grand Falls Windsor.” “It’s very ad hoc, everyone is different. It’s a practical approach.”

One important consideration when evaluating the potential for sharing is service capacity. St. John’s Regional Fire Department, for example, has identified excess capacity (capacity to share) while water and animal control facilities in the City are described as stretched to their limits. Torbay will have to determine if it is stretching its animal control resources too far after a six month trial period with Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove while Mount Pearl has room to share in its facility, and with its added enforcement staff.

“When people see that you’re coming at it from the perspective of trying to help one another and you say here are the costs, we’re having trouble balancing our budgets just like you, if we can do something for you that will help us and you don’t have to hire your own or provide the full-fledged service yourself, it meets both cost parameters. I think the key to regional services is that there is a benefit to both parties,” suggests Mount Pearl’s Gerard Lewis. The experiences of the CCDA further illustrate the importance of ensuring the needs of all partners are met, urban and rural, small and large.

Experiences in the region also suggest that if a shared service does not meet the needs of a particular community it works best if the flexibility exists for them to opt out of participating, such as in the fire service or aspects of the provincial purchasing program. Flexibility has also been a key feature in the Joint Council constitution and in watershed agreements that allow for permitted cases of non-compliance upon agreement from both parties.

#### *Communication and education*

CCDA Development Officer Dawn Chaplin suggests, “education and communication - there can never be too much .... You have to be at the table, to be willing to openly communicate, to discuss, to learn and to agree to disagree. The reality is we can’t think small anymore.” Others suggest, “Don’t try to hide things or costs, be transparent. If they need information, put it all on the table”. “Don’t allow things to fester – agree to disagree on some issues.” Further, “the fee structure is the biggest challenge, but if you sit down with people and put all the facts on the table and do it in an open manner I think you’ll come up with a reasonable approach and success.” This lesson is demonstrated by the open discussions that have occurred when costs have gone up and fees have been raised with little difficulty, such as increases in euthanizing fees for animals in or gull management costs at Robin Hood Bay. The Joint Council has facilitated such discussions and has, as a result, been instrumental in supporting regional service delivery. Meetings of Northeast Avalon planning directors also demonstrate the potential of ongoing communication and dialogue.

#### *Start small, start somewhere*

Representatives suggested that relationships develop over time and that sharing is best done in stages. “We started with animal control and it was pretty straightforward. We had to build a facility of a size to meet our needs but obviously you hope you never need the full capacity or you have a bigger problem, but it doesn’t matter where they dogs come from and we started to build that relationship with Paradise.” “I think the way you deal with it is start small, develop that relationship so that you know that you are both there to respond in a helpful manner ... Start with the easier service that is not threatening to either one as far as their identity, develop a relationship, a respect and be open”.

#### **Future Directions**

There are many ideas and no clear sense of next steps but there is a consensus among Northeast Avalon municipal leaders, both elected and staff, that regional services will continue to expand and evolve. “We need to look away from the barriers and look at ways of getting it done. Overall we have too many communities and too many people trying to provide too few services to too few people.”

### *Regional government?*

One longstanding proposal is that a form of regional government be implemented, building on the experiences of the St. John's Metropolitan Area Board (Metro Board) from 1963 to 90s and the various regional committees that have operated since the Board was disbanded. By the early 1980s the Metro Board, which had been established to ... had lost most of its area of jurisdiction due to boundary extensions and amalgamations. Its ongoing relevance came into question. The Board's model of government appointed representatives was also seen as inferior to that of municipalities lead by representatives elected by area residents. A 1982 discussion paper on the restructuring of Metro Board recommended that the Board become a Regional Authority, assuming some responsibilities on behalf of existing municipalities such as delivery of regional water, sewer, fire, planning, economic development services and full responsibilities for delivery of all municipal services to communities under Metro Board's jurisdiction. City of St. John's countered that regional governments elsewhere in Canada had seldom had any success and put forward an alternative vision of two large municipalities: one enlarged St. John's Urban Centre and another elected District Council servicing the thirteen remaining municipalities in the region (Cphoon 1982). Both proposals met with resistance and neither was implemented.

A 1990 Commission on amalgamation in the Northeast Avalon suggested the formation of a regional authority but Part 2 of the report with details about the role and structure of the authority was never released. The City of St. John's responded by reiterating their long-time position against regional government (City of St. John's 1990).

New legislation was proclaimed in February 2004 that allows government to formally establish regional authorities to facilitate regional service delivery. The Regional Services Board Act allows for the establishment of authorities comprised of local government representatives. Authorities have the ability to impose fees and levies to finance their operations and are presented as an alternative to informal and semi-formal inter-municipal service sharing agreements that "were not enforceable under a legislative regime... Essentially, this act formalizes and expands existing regional service provisions". Regional waste management committees on the Northern Peninsula and the greater Avalon are seeking authority status (NL 2004b).

Some see regional authorities or other regional government forms as a method for dealing with differences between incorporated municipalities and Local Service Districts, "making sure everyone is into some kind of regional government, especially LSDs and areas that are struggling." Yet considerable uncertainty remains as to whether a form of regional government is the right approach. "It may not work here, we're self-sufficient." "Whether there will be some kind of regional government on the NE Avalon in the future, I don't know if that would work," says one senior municipal staff member. "Government has passed legislation allowing the establishment of regional governments. It's too difficult. If we blanket things regionally it might be to the benefit of one community and the negative of another". CBS and Mount Pearl have voiced concerns about the Act and the opportunity it provides for the Province to impose regional services without consultation. Even their response to the Act was cooperative. Mount Pearl prepared briefing notes that were reviewed, revised and submitted by CBS. "Mount Pearl is bigger and has more resources. We don't need to reinvent the wheel if they've done the research and developed the policy." Mount Pearl suggests that no additional levels of government are

required but that existing councils and staff can manage regional affairs. Regional Councils or Services Boards may be needed in the future as services evolve but not now. In the case that regional government is forced upon the region they support a Regional Council made up of existing municipal representatives rather than an independent Regional Services Authority (Mount Pearl 1997).

#### *Identified opportunities*

With or without new legislated regional governance structures there is no doubt that municipal service sharing will continue to expand and evolve. Portugal Cove-St. Philips points to possibilities for further cooperation on garbage collection, water quality testing and animal control. “Animal control would be positive if something could be worked out in the region and we have talked about the possibility of taking a lead on it. We currently use existing staff as part of their duties and have our own facility.” They will look at sharing garbage collection services when their current contract expires “but we’ll probably end up doing it ourselves. We’ve looked at it before”. Consideration is also being given to the Regional Water Authority doing all of the water quality testing, a concept the Town is supporting although there are mixed opinions in the region and union issues to deal with.

Paradise points to the potential for cooperation with Mount Pearl in information technology (expertise and equipment purchasing) and for joint marketing of potential for oil-based development. They also point to garbage contracting as a possibility along with shared recreation facilities. The City of St. John’s suggests that the capacity exists to provide 911 services elsewhere (infrastructure, people, and technology), adding that the problem is familiarity with the region being served. Mount Pearl has also identified additional capacity in enforcement and animal boarding.

CCDA is looking to launch a similar process to that taking place in CBC to examine service sharing potential in the Killick coast/St. John’s East area (Bauline, Torbay, Portugal Cove-St. Philips and Torbay). She sees parallels between the roles of Holyrood and Torbay in the two respective regions. The organization is also facilitating the creation of sub-committees for each of the three priorities identified in the Joint Council/CCDA regional planning session. Sub-committees will include two members of the Joint Council and a CCDA staff member. Initiatives such as the regional economic development strategy and communications strategy will continue to work at building relationships between the urban core and outlying communities of the Northeast Avalon.

Other areas of potential for sharing in the planning field include coastal planning and the purchase of planning services. More cooperation is also needed with groups such as the East Coast Trail Association. “It’s amazing but coastal planning is seen to be almost a separate discipline. You can’t put aquaculture in a bay without talking to the municipality. They might put a sewage outfall there!” Rather than being an issue of inter-municipal cooperation, coastal planning efforts are largely led by provincial and federal governments.

By joining forces on a planning process, one planner suggested, smaller communities that could otherwise not afford to do so may be able retain a planner. Most plans cost a minimum of \$30,000. If two communities put in \$20,000 each they could retain someone with a lot of

experience ... one of the many possible directions the future of municipal service sharing in the Northeast Avalon might take.

## **Information Resources**

### Documents available through CCRC:

Northeast Avalon Joint Council Constitution

Sample copy of backup/standby fire service agreement

St. John's Harbour Cleanup Project Contribution Agreement

CCDA Annual Reports (2003 and 2004)

St. John's Regional Fire Department 2002 Presentation to Joint Council

Regional Planning for the Northeast Avalon Nov. 2004 Summary Report

Letter of agreement for animal control assistant (Mount Pearl to Paradise)

Animal control regulations: Flatrock, Torbay and Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove

City of St. John's Act Chapter C-17 Regional services

St. John's Regional Water Services Committee Bylaw (proposed changes 2005)

Also see City Archives, Municipal and Provincial Affairs, and MUN for relevant reports and studies.

### Websites:

Capital Coast Development Assoc.:

City of Mount Pearl:

City of St. John's:

Destination St. John's: [www.canadasfareast.com](http://www.canadasfareast.com)

\* list all municipal sites? CCRC?

### Contacts:

Capital Coast Development Assoc., Dawn Chaplin

Killick Coast Tourism Association

Northeast Avalon Joint Councils, Walter Butt, Chair

St. John's Regional Fire Department

St. John's Regional Water Committee

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City of St. John's. 1990. Position of the City of St. John's Respecting the Commission's Report on Planning for the Future: Consolidation of Municipalities Within the Northeast Avalon. Draft. August 3, 1990.

Cohon, N. 1982. Municipal Reorganization – Northeast Avalon Region. Position paper prepared for the City of St. John's. Nov. 4, 1982.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. 2005. Press Release re. St. John's Urban Region Plan.



----- 2004a. "Greater Avalon Regional Waste Management Committee to meet with municipal leaders on proposed waste management system for Avalon". Press release September 22, 2004.

----- 2004b. "Regional Services Board Act proclaimed". Press release February 23, 2004.

----- 2002. Stats.

Town of Goulds. 1990. Brief on Feasibility of Municipal Amalgamation.

Town of Paradise.

- check and complete references

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