

Appendix A

Municipal Plan Background Report

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Newfoundland is in a period of change and renewal as declining trends in population and economy reverse and offer new opportunities for municipalities. As communities look ahead and plan for the future, sustainability will be a key overarching goal. According to the Provincial Community Accounts analysis of 2001 and 2006 demographic data, Norris Point achieves average scores for most community well-being indicators, leaving significant room for improvement in the future. According to the 2001 census data Norris Point ranks within the top provincial categories for education and employment, which offers great potential to build on in community sustainability planning exercises. Norris Point has the opportunity to capitalize on the positive shifts in Newfoundland and plan for social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. All of these elements of sustainability are interconnected and essential for ensuring that Norris Point is a complete and healthy community well into the future.

Profile of the Social Environment

In order for Norris Point to plan effectively for social sustainability, residents and community leaders must consider population dynamics, education, health and culture.

Population

According to the 2006 census, Norris Point has a population of 700, and experienced a population decline of 10.8% between 2001 and 2006.

This represents a loss ten times greater than in the province as a whole, which experienced a decline of 1.5% during the same period. Population in Newfoundland and Norris Point experienced fairly steady decline since the mid-1980s, as Newfoundlanders sought employment in the booming economies of the western provinces (Figures A & B) (Statistics Canada 2008; Community Accounts 2008). However, the last half of 2007 saw an overall slowing of outmigration in the province and early 2008 showed a population increase, comprised of people returning to their home province. This represents the largest number of people moving back to Newfoundland in the past 30 years. The comparably low cost of living and new opportunities are making Newfoundland's municipalities attractive places to live (Wyman, 2008). Although the overall population in Norris Point has declined, there are some new and returning residents in Norris Point constructing new houses.

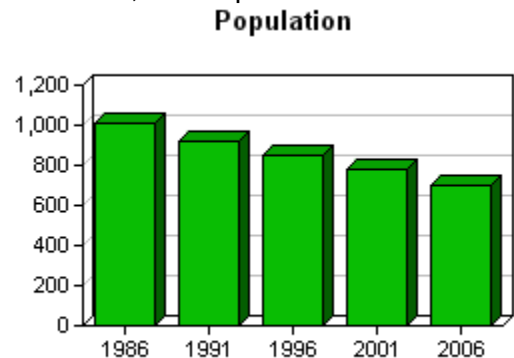


Figure A: Population decline in Norris Point (Community Accounts, 2008)

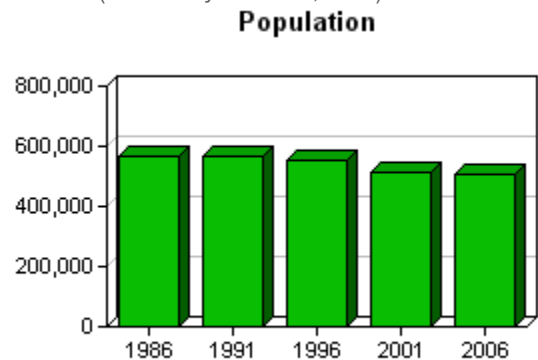


Figure B: Population decline in Newfoundland (Community Accounts 2008)

Aging population is a future planning concern all across North America as the baby boomer generation (those born between 1947 and 1966) grows older, retires, volunteers less, and starts to put increasing pressure on health care and other services, such as assisted living facilities. Newfoundland has seen its overall population age increase substantially, in large part due to the loss of younger age groups to outmigration. In 1971 the median age in the province was about 21, and rose to 42 years old by 2007 (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007).

Norris Point demonstrates an aging population profile, with a median age of 45.5 years old. Population pyramids are graphs that show how the population is distributed by age and sex. The population pyramid for the province shows a significant bulge in the proportion of the population who are part of the baby boomer generation and a small number of those between the ages of 20 and 35 (Figure C). Like the provincial profile, Norris Point's population pyramid shows a large number of baby boomers, with the largest number in the oldest boomer cohort (55-59 years old) (Figure D). Norris Point is also slim in the 20-35 year old age cohorts, particularly men; showing the impact of outmigration. There is a low number between the ages 0-4, which could be because of the low population of young adults who would be having children this age. Norris Point differs from the provincial profile in having a relatively large number of children and youth between the ages of 5-19 (Community Accounts, 2008, Statistics Canada, 2008, Newfoundland and Labrador 2007).

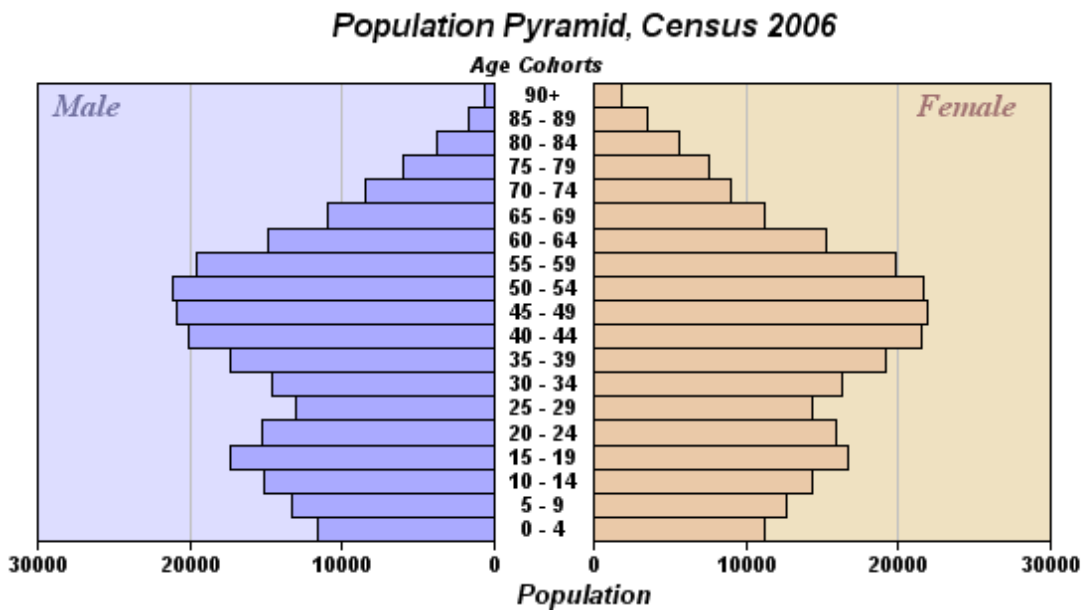


Figure C: Population pyramid for Newfoundland (Community Accounts 2008)

Population Pyramid, Census 2006



Figure D: Population pyramid for Norris Point (Community Accounts 2008)

Health

Community Accounts assessed health indicators using data from 2005 for Economic Zone 07, which Norris Point is a part of (Figure E). According to this information, the majority of people (58.7%) rated their health as very good or excellent. This is less than the percentage of people in the entire province who rated their health as very good or higher. There is a higher percentage of smokers in Economic Zone 07 (27.2%) compared to the provincial rate (19.3). The obesity rate in Economic Zone 07 is at par with the province at 24.5%. However, over 62% of the population is considered overweight according to the Body Mass Index. This is a bit higher than the percentage for all of Newfoundland, which is over 60%, and much higher than the percentage of Canadians who are overweight, which is 49%. This means that the majority of people in Newfoundland and Economic Zone 07 are overweight. Diseases of the circulatory system are a significant health concern in both Norris Point and the Province as a whole. Between 2000 and 2004, circulatory system diseases accounted for the highest

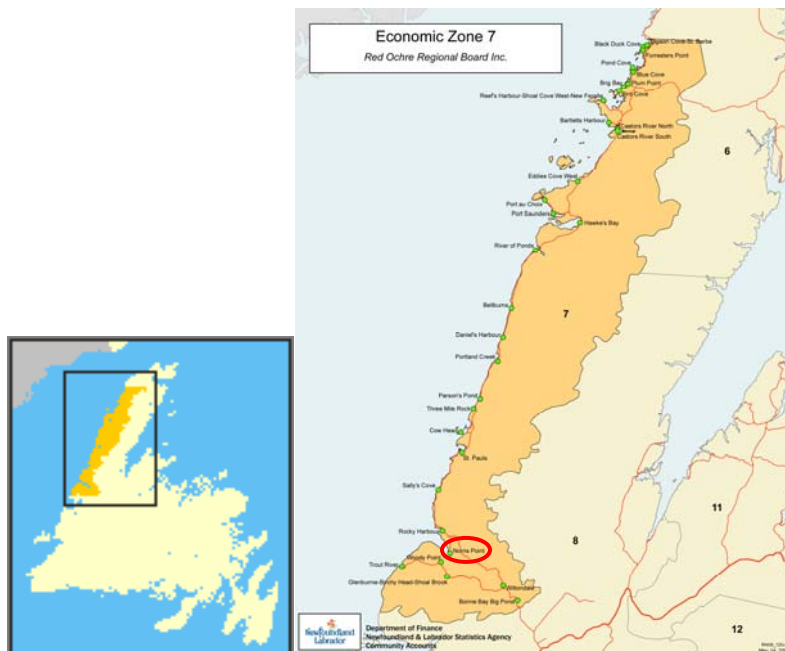


Figure E: Economic Zone 7, includes Norris Point (Community Accounts 2008)

percentage of hospital admittances in both Economic Zone 07 and the Province. Circulatory diseases are followed by diseases of the digestive system for the highest hospital admittances.

Education

Norris Point has a high proportion of highly educated residents; however, there are also a substantial number of residents without a high school diploma. According to the 2006 census, 64.3% have a high school diploma or higher and 17% of people between the ages 25-54 have a bachelor degree or higher. This places Norris Point in the top 26.5% of all communities in the province, and well above the provincial average of 15.1% (Community Accounts 2008). However, 28.2% of people aged 18-64 do not have a high school diploma, which is above the provincial percentage of 25.1% (Figure F, Statistics Canada, 2008).

The elementary school in Norris Point was closed in 1993 and the high school was closed in 2003. All children and youth are now bussed to Gros Morne Academy, in neighbouring town Rocky Harbour. There is a library and Community Access Program (CAP) site providing computer and internet access located in the Julia Ann Walsh Heritage Centre. Norris Point is also home to Memorial University of Newfoundland's Bonne Bay Marine Station, a facility equipped with sophisticated teaching and research laboratories, a multimedia theatre, library/resource centre, aquarium, and accommodations for students. The Bonne Bay Marine Station also has a mandate for public outreach and is open to the public and tourists.

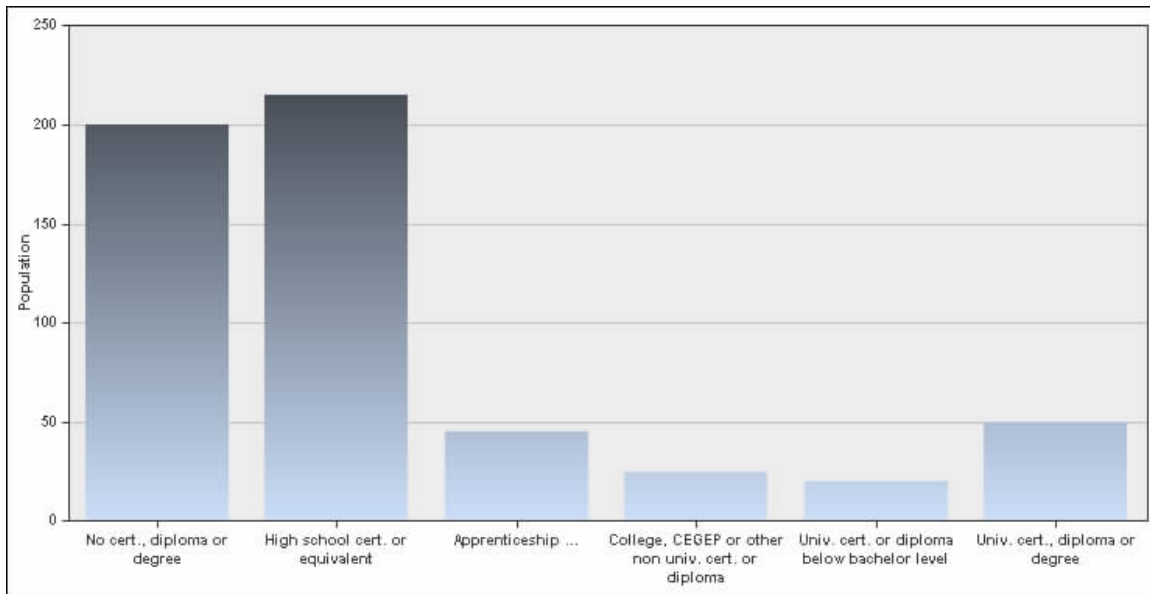


Figure F: Education Attainment in Norris Point (Statistics Canada 2008)

Culture

Historically, Norris Point's economy and culture were tied to natural resources. The census data on employment in 2006 demonstrates however, that most of Norris Point's labour force is now employed in service industries, and not in extractive resource industries. This signals a shift in the economy and will necessarily result in a change in culture. Large service industry employers include tourism and health care. Local history is an important cultural resource in Norris Point. Elements of local history that are celebrated include past industries, houses, families, and aboriginal artefacts. According to the 2006 census, there are no visible minorities in Norris Point. Ten people (1.5% of the total population) identify as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada 2008).



Jenniex House Municipal Heritage Building

Social & Cultural Environment: Looking Ahead

Norris Point has established health related facilities and services, such as The Bonne Bay Health Centre, Bonne Bay Physiotherapy Clinic, and Bonne Bay PharmaChoice. The concentration of these facilities and services in Norris Point make it an important regional centre for health care. This community strength should be built upon to expand supportive services and special care to the aging population in the region.



Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital Municipal Heritage Building in 1953
(Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008)

Despite the availability of high quality health resources in the community, there is a need within Economic Zone 07, which includes Norris Point, to promote healthy lifestyles in order to address the high proportion of smokers, overweight residents and the large incidence of health emergencies due to circulatory diseases. Even though health is primarily a provincial issue, Norris Point can consider ways in which the town can improve facilities, services and community design to encourage healthy living and physical activity. Improving access to healthy food, creating safer sidewalks and walking trails, putting no smoking, and anti-idling by-laws in place, as well as enhancing municipal recreation facilities and programs are all examples of areas that can be addressed at the community level and improve health.

The community has a great resource of children and youth. Ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for child and youth development will be essential in supporting the young residents of Norris Point, and retaining their skills, insights and enthusiasm. There is certainly room to grow in the 20-35 year old age group, and the town should consider strategies to encourage young adults to return to or come to the community to take advantage of the low cost of living and potential future employment opportunities.

The 2010 Come Home Year, to celebrate Norris Point's fiftieth anniversary, will be a useful event to showcase opportunities available in the community. While it is difficult to project future populations, as long as positive economic trends continue in the province, Norris Point can expect some modest residential growth in the coming years. If the town's population does grow, community leaders in Norris Point will have to consider how equipped it is to both welcome back residents returning from other provinces and newcomers who may be immigrants to Canada.



Bonne Bay Marine Station

Norris Point has an important resource base of highly educated adults. The community also has a large number of residents without a high school education that may wish to upgrade. The statistics on educational attainment and the educational facilities available within the community reveal some disparity. For the local children and youth there is a lack of facilities and resources in town, as they must be bussed out to the regional school. On the other hand however there is a world-class post-secondary teaching and research facility. Because of the large number of youth and children in the community, enhancing educational programs and extra-curricular activities will also become an important element of social sustainability planning. An opportunity exists to improve access to adult education and training programs. Community members and the local school board should work with the Bonne Bay Marine Station to ensure that local children, youth and young adults can become familiar with the work of the station and educated about the marine resources in their area through educational programs and events such as special workshops, courses, or summer camps.

In planning for the future, Norris Point needs to consider how to balance the traditional way of life which has historically defined the culture with current shifts in economic realities. A challenge for planning for cultural sustainability is how to respect and preserve elements of the traditional culture, while at the same time looking ahead to the future and celebrating new cultural opportunities.

Profile of the Natural Environment

The natural environment surrounding Norris Point is uniquely beautiful and has a wide variety of geological formations and wildlife. Natural resources have supported Norris Point families over time through fishing, logging and more recently, tourism. Bonne Bay is encompassed by Gros Morne National Park, though Norris Point remains outside of



Norris Point surrounded by Gros Morne National Park

Park boundaries. The park is characterized by the mountain plateaus of the Long Range Mountains. The national importance of the Bonne Bay area was recognized in 1973. By agreement with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Government of Canada established the National Park to protect and present an outstanding example of Newfoundland's western highlands. In 1987 it was internationally recognized for its significance and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Natural Environment: Looking Ahead

Environmental sustainability is the base upon which economic, social and cultural sustainability must be built (Figure G). Norris Point was settled amidst abundant natural resources that are appreciated for their aesthetic and recreation uses. There is growing community concern over environmental issues, such as coastal erosion and air pollution from idling tour buses. Ensuring environmental quality will also protect the economic opportunities made available through adventure tourism, ecotourism, and educational tourism. From a sustainability perspective, the park is a tremendous resource and growth of the town should support the synergies that exist between local economic development and the National Park. It is in the town's interests to support the continued sustainability of the park and the preservation of the natural beauty as a means of supporting Norris Point's economic development.

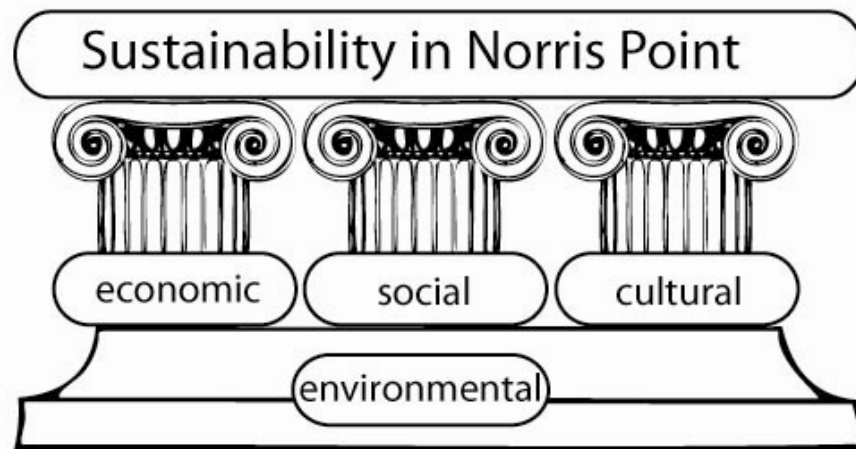


Figure G: The pillars of sustainability in Norris Point, supported by environmental sustainability.

Profile of the Built Environment

Currently, there is no defined centre of town. There have instead been clusters of commercial uses near institutions, which supplied much of their customer base and foot traffic. This pattern of commercial development is evident near the old and new hospitals, the post office, and the Bonne Bay Marine Station. Most of the town's housing is built along the main roads. There is an increase in new development on waterfront properties.

Housing

Newfoundland is currently experiencing a housing boom with housing starts up 19% in 2007. Sales of existing homes reached their second highest level ever in early 2008 (Wyman 2008). According to the 2006 census, there are 260 private dwellings in Norris Point. Single detached houses are the most common housing type (92.3%); however there are some apartment duplexes (3.8%). Most residents own their own home; although there were about 20 rental units counted in the latest census.

The 2006 average value of an owned dwelling in the province was \$132,494. The average value is lower in Norris Point (\$89,913), but higher in Corner Brook (\$132,493), the largest city nearby. Housing costs in Norris Point, including monthly rent and mortgage payments are lower than in the province as a whole. Although the total number of private dwellings did not increase much over the past census periods, the average value of owned dwellings increased in Norris Point, as it did for the province as a whole. (Table A) (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Table A: Average value of owned private dwellings in Norris Point compared to the provincial average from 1996 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, 2006 census data)

	Average Value in 1996	Average Value in 2001	Average Value in 2006
Norris Point	\$36,307	\$43,860	\$89,913
Newfoundland & Labrador	\$70,835	\$76,283	\$111,711

The majority of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1986 (67.3%). A quarter of the community's houses were constructed between 1961 and 1971, followed by a decade of decline in housing construction. Housing construction picked up in the decades that followed, and 34.6% of current dwellings were constructed between 1996 and 2006 (Figure H, Community Accounts 2008 & Statistics Canada 2008). Between 2001 and 2006, 3.8% of housing stock had to have major repairs, which is lower than in the province as a whole (7.9%) (Statistics Canada, 2008).

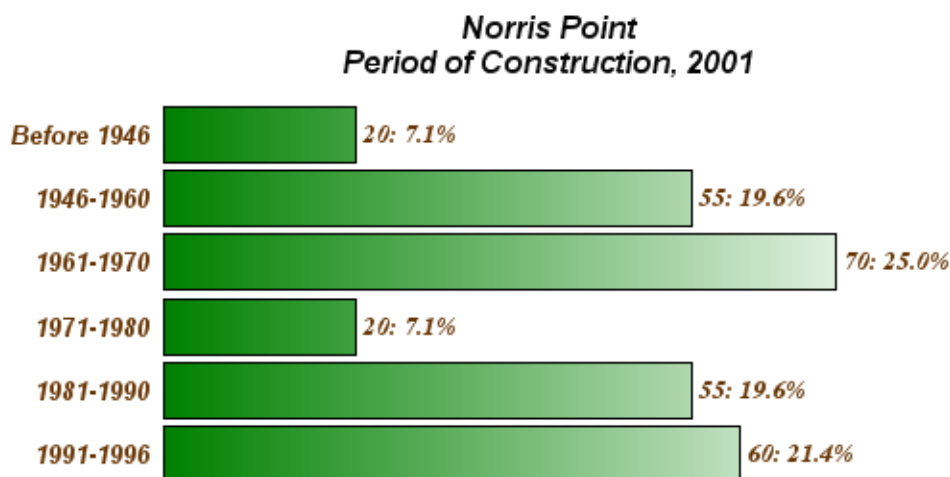


Figure H: Period of Housing Construction in Norris Point (Community Accounts 2008)

Built Environment: Looking Ahead

One of the challenges that Norris Point faces in the future is linking the dispersed nodes of development and enhancing the town's "sense of place". This will not only provide a more cohesive development pattern for the future development of Norris Point, but it will also provide better opportunities for tourism. Many of the developed commercial buildings are no longer occupied, particularly in the cluster near the old hospital, now the Julia Ann Walsh Heritage Centre. Efforts should be focussed on making this a viable centre by encouraging new commercial, or mixed use developments in this location rather than increasing growth near the new hospital and pharmacy location.

Since much of the housing stock was constructed prior to 1986, housing repair could be a significant issue when planning ahead for community sustainability. New housing development will continue to put increasing development pressure on waterfront property. The town should develop clear strategies and policies to guide new growth, and ensure it is in line with the character of the town and that extending municipal services will not place undue tax burden on current residents.



A dispersed commercial node needing connection



Julia Ann Walsh Heritage Centre provides a good opportunity to strengthen this commercial node

Profile of the Economic Environment

Economic sustainability is an essential element for overall community sustainability. While many of the factors that shape local economies are beyond the control of municipalities, there are opportunities for Norris Point to make their community an attractive place for business investment and a place where employees can have a high quality of life. Employment and income data can shed light on the state of the economy in Norris Point and patterns that have developed there over time.

Employment

Employment during the last census period has been growing in Canada at an annual average rate of 1.7%; this is the highest rate increase among all G7 countries. Notable is the increase in of employment in the services sector, particularly in retail which grew at a rate of 1.8% per year, almost reaching parity with employment in manufacturing. Employment in Newfoundland and Labrador grew at a slightly lower rate of 1.4% per year during the same period. This was a substantial improvement however compared to an average annual employment growth rate of only 0.5% between 1996 and 2001.

Growth was fuelled by the province's service sector as well as mining, oil and gas extraction, as well as the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry; attracting over 7,000 new workers to the province (Statistics Canada 2008b).

This increase in employment in the services industries at the national and provincial levels can be seen in Norris Point. The service industries are the largest employers in the town. Health care and social services, educational services, business services and other services are the biggest employers. These service industries employ 83.3% of the total experienced workforce 15 years and older. All of the women included in the experienced workforce are employed in the service industries. Agriculture and other resource-based industries employ 5% of Norris Point's experienced male workforce. Construction employs another 5%, followed by wholesale trade (3.3%) and retail trade (3.3%) (Statistics Canada, 2008). The Norris Point business directory demonstrates that tourism is a large part of the service industry, and will likely increase in importance as the community strives to maintain the economy and create new employment opportunities (Norris Point, 2008).

The 2006 unemployment rate in Norris Point was high compared to the provincial and national rates as well as in comparison to Corner Brook, the largest municipality in the area (Table B). Women are experiencing a higher unemployment rate than men in Norris Point. Even though the employment rate in Newfoundland increased in the last census period, the employment rate in Norris Point decreased between 2001 and 2006 from 41.3% to 28.1% (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Table B: Comparison between Employment and Unemployment rate comparison between Norris Point, Newfoundland, Corner Brook and Canada (2006 Stats Canada Community Profile Data)

2006 Employment rate		
Norris Point:	38.4%	
	Men: 41.5%	Women: 34.5% (7% less than men)
Province:	47.9%	
	Men: 50.4%	Women: 45.7 (4.7% less than men)
Corner Brook:	49.0%	
	Men: 50.0%	Women: 48.3% (1.7% less than men)
National:	62.4%	
	Men: 67.6%	Women: 57.5% (10.1% less than men)
2006 Unemployment rate:		
Norris Point:	32.8%	
	Men: 26.7%	Women: 41.2% (14.5% higher than men)
Province:	18.6%	
	Men: 20.7% (4.7% higher than women)	Women: 16.3%
Corner Brook:	13.7%	
	Men: 17.4%	(7.4% higher than women) Women: 10.0%
National:	6.6%	
	Men: 6.5%	Women: 6.6% (0.1% higher than men)

Income

Residents who have recently returned to Newfoundland from other provinces are bringing increased wealth and spending power with them (Wyman 2008). In Norris Point, all income measures (personal income per capita, & disposable income, real disposable income, average couple family income) rose between 2000 and 2002, then took a bit of a dip in 2003, recovered in 2004 to around the 2002 levels and rose again in 2005 (See for example Personal Income per Capita Figure I) (Community Accounts 2008).

**Norris Point
Personal Income Per Capita
1990-2005**

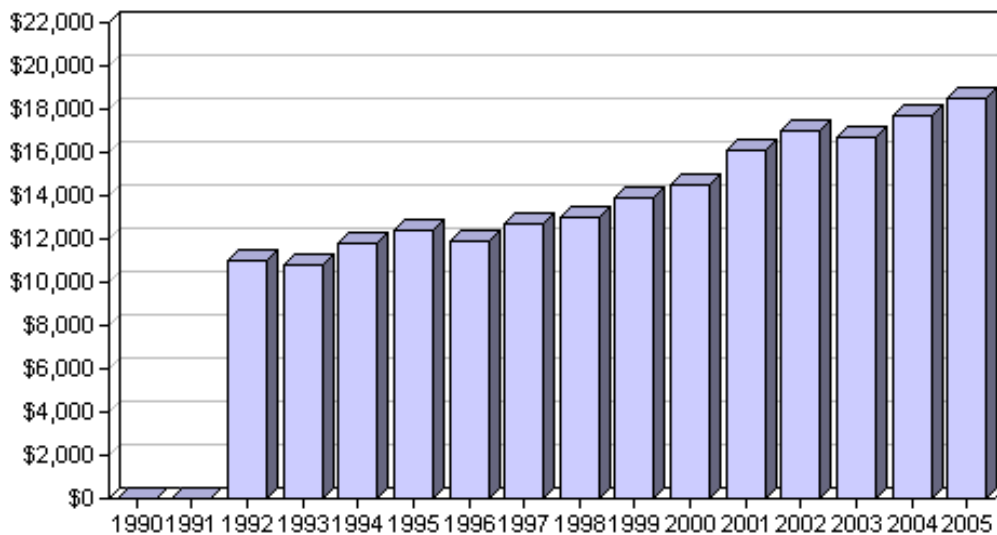


Figure I: Personal Income Per Capita in Norris Point (Community Accounts 2008)

Half of the couple families in Norris Point had incomes of more than \$45,600 in 2005, which is lower than the provincial median income of \$53,600. Half of the lone-parent families in Norris Point had incomes of less than \$23,100 in 2005, which is similar to the provincial level. In Norris Point, 69.7% of income comes from market sources and 30.3% come from government transfers. The provincial government refers to this as the “self reliance ratio”. Norris Point has a lower self reliance ratio than for the province as a whole, which receives 78.4% of income from market sources. Over half the labour force (55.4% or 220 people) collected employment insurance in 2006, which is higher than the provincial rate of 35.5% (Community Accounts, 2008).

Unpaid work is a part of every economy and 80.4% residents of Norris Point reported hours of unpaid work, including housework, child care, and assistance to seniors. A greater number of women reported hours in all three categories of unpaid work, which is consistent with the provincial and national trend (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Economic Environment: Looking Ahead

These are times of economic uncertainty. There have been significant positive changes in the economic outlook for Newfoundland; however global economic downturn is likely to slow down economic growth across Canada, including Newfoundland. It is prudent for Town Council to stay informed about economic trends and seek advice as to how those will impact the town. As the Town's economy continues to rely on tourism, there could be reason for concern if the number of visitors to the area decreases significantly.

Municipal Plan Background Report References

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