

January 10, 2023

Electoral Boundaries and Representation Commission
500 Beaverbrook Court, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
Sent Via Email: CommissionNB@gnb.ca

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Council and citizens of the City of Fredericton (herein after the "City"), I extend my appreciation for the ongoing work of the Electoral Boundaries and Representation Commission. As you are aware, the City submitted written comments and made a presentation during the Commission's initial public consultation phase. The purpose of this letter is to provide further comments in response to the Commission's Preliminary Report, dated December 12, 2022. City Council, at its City Council meeting on January 9, 2023, directed that this letter be sent to the Commission for your review and consideration.

As observed in our previous letter dated September 12, 2022, the City recognizes that effective representation is a foundational element of our Canadian democracy, and the work of the Commission has significant importance for all New Brunswickers. For your reference, I reiterate the City's preliminary comments as shared in our previous letter, as well as during the Commission's Public Hearing in Fredericton on September 15, 2022, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The current Fredericton region ridings are inconsistent with the established electoral boundary alignment for the Province's other major cities;
2. Urban versus rural communities of interest are not fairly or appropriately aligned for the electorate of the Greater Fredericton area; and,
3. City Council specifically requests that four ridings be created that are wholly contained within the 2023 boundaries of the City of Fredericton.

While we feel that some of these matters were considered as reflected in the Commission's Preliminary Report, we continue to have concerns with respect to ensuring the City's urban electorate is sufficiently and appropriately represented in alignment with the guiding principles of the *Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act*. We are most encouraged by the Commission's proposed configuration which would result in an overall increase from two urban ridings wholly contained within the City's boundaries, to three predominantly urban ridings which contain the entirety of the City of Fredericton. We commend these preliminary recommendations and observe that this would be a positive boundary realignment outcome from an overall urban representation perspective. Notwithstanding, we continue to have

concerns with the preliminary boundary recommendations and submit the following for your further consideration:

- 1. Urban District Boundaries Do Not Align Communities of Interest Within the Region's Urban Centre:** The configuration of electoral district boundaries such that they are physically split in alignment with major arterials (i.e. Regent Street on the City's south side, and Brookside Drive on the north side) is not representative of the interests of the urban electorate. Rather, we bring your attention to the ridings as proposed by the City in our September letter and subsequent presentation to the Commission (attached). The City's proposal would result in ridings that are more truly reflective of the electorate by establishing districts comprised of the City's urban core, on the north and south sides, respectively, while also creating two additional ridings wholly contained within the City's boundaries comprised of portions of the City's more sub-urban areas. In our view, the districts as the City proposed more fully consider and respect the communities of interest within the urban area, while concurrently ensuring the urban electorate is duly represented within corresponding urban ridings. We encourage the Commission to reconsider the use of arterial streets as district boundaries, and to instead consider the application of district boundaries which reflect the City's urban structure and thus the respective interests of the urban-centred electorate.
- 2. Urban Electorate Disproportionately Distributed Among Rural Electoral Districts:** Further to the preceding item, we note that a general review of electoral district alignment throughout the province reflects general consistency with establishing electoral district boundaries in rural areas in a manner that ensures rural communities are not divided into different electoral districts, but rather are wholly located within the same electoral district. This approach seems consistent for both current and proposed electoral districts in consideration of rural areas. However, there appears to be less emphasis and consideration on achieving the same, in some urban areas including the City of Fredericton. In our view, this is contrary to Section 11(4)(b) of the Act which includes consideration of "local government and other administrative boundaries" among the guiding principles that should be considered. Fredericton's City Council appreciates the challenge of aligning district boundaries while maintaining 49 electoral districts within a defined electoral quotient. Notwithstanding, equal representation is not achieved when the urban electorate is consistently distributed among rural electoral districts in order to achieve ridings with the required population. Likewise, the voice of the rural electorate is diminished when partially comprised of an urban electorate base.

Based on information provided by Elections New Brunswick, the two proposed electoral districts which would be comprised of a combination of urban and rural voters, inclusive of portions of the northside of Fredericton, would have the following electorate distribution:

38 Fredericton – Grand Lake

Inside City of Fredericton – 4,687

42 Fredericton – York

Inside City of Fredericton – 7,390

Outside City of Fredericton – 6,917
Total: 11,604

Outside City of Fredericton – 5,074
Total: 12,464

This means that electors residing in Fredericton would represent 40% and 60%, respectively, of these ridings. We observe that urban and rural residents often have competing interests and objectives, and certainly there is very limited common ground on many issues of concern to the provincial government. We submit that the proposal of the City submitted previously and again herein more appropriately meets the spirit and the letter of the legislation, by respecting municipal boundaries, valuing the community of interest shared by the urban electorate, and providing more effective representation for rural voters.

3. **Proposed District 42 Fredericton-York Does Not Allow for Projected Urban Growth:** As noted in the preceding item, proposed District 42 Fredericton-York would have a total electorate of 12,464 electors. This number exceeds the electoral quotient of 11,714 electors per electoral district, but is within the allowable quotient deviation of +/-15%. Notwithstanding, the City is concerned that in proposing this riding configuration the Commission may not be aware, and thus may not have fully considered, that the portion of the City of Fredericton proposed to be located within District 42 is one of the fastest growing areas of the City. Given that this district is already 6% over the quotient we note that as currently proposed District 42 may not sufficiently allow for population growth within this area of the region. As such, it appears that District 42 as proposed does not align with the guiding principles contained in Section 11 of the *Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act*, including Section 11(4)(c) “the rate of population growth within a region”.
4. **Communities of Interest Cannot be Appropriately Represented When Divided Among Multiple Electoral Districts:** As was our position in 2013, it continues to be City Council’s view that the current district configuration divides the Capital Region into electoral districts which are not consistent with the guiding principles contained in Section 11 of the Act, including Section 11()(a) “Communities of Interest” and Section 11(4)(b) “local government and other government boundaries”. This view was expressed in our preceding letter, and are now reiterated pursuant to the proposed district configuration as outlined in the Commission’s Preliminary Report. While some of these concerns are reflected in our preceding comments, of further concern is the proposal to continue to divide the historic community of Marysville into three separate electoral districts:
 - a. District 38 Fredericton – Grand Lake
 - b. District 41 Fredericton North
 - c. District 42 Fredericton York

Marysville, or the Marysville Historic District, has a population of 3,994 people according to the 2021 Census by Statistics Canada, and has been registered as a National Historic Site of Canada since 2007. Marysville is a historic community unto itself, and has been an integral part of the City of Fredericton since its amalgamation in 1973. As the Council for

the City of Fredericton we are incredibly concerned with the current proposal which seeks to perpetuate the division of Marysville into multiple electoral districts. This proposal does not respect communities of interest or local government boundaries. We reiterate our concern and position regarding proposed electoral districts that assign the values and rights of urban-residing voters to rural electoral districts. The decision to facilitate splitting Marysville among three separate ridings demonstrates a lack of respect for the Marysville electorate, particularly when the opportunity exists to maintain the community of interest for this urban, historic area by instead placing the communities of Stanley, Minto and Chipman, for example, into a single district. This alternative would achieve multiple objectives, including aligning urban and rural voters with their respective urban and rural communities of interest, while also ensuring that the electorate in the established communities are not divided among multiple voting districts.

The current proposal for Marysville, and in turn the City, inherently diminishes the voice of these respective electorates, as well as the interests of the respective urban and rural communities. We respectfully request that the Commission reconsider this configuration with the aim of ensuring communities of interest and local governments in urban areas are effectively represented.

5. **Finally, we bring to your attention that a number of the concerns outlined above could be effectively remedied through a subtle yet significant rethinking of the alignment of district boundaries as currently proposed.** Specifically, rather than combining portions of the City's electorate with portions of adjacent rural areas as reflected in the current configuration for Districts 38 and 42, we propose a reconfiguration wherein electors residing in the City and those in areas outside the City would be respectively combined within the districts shown below:

Commission's Current Proposal:

38 Fredericton – Grand Lake

Inside City of Fredericton – 4,687
Outside City of Fredericton – 6,917
Total: 11,604

42 Fredericton – York

Inside City of Fredericton – 7,390
Outside City of Fredericton – 5,074
Total: 12,464

City of Fredericton's Requested Alternative:

District 38 – Inside Fredericton

District 38 Inside City electors – 4,687
District 42 Inside City electors – 7,390
Total: 12,077

District 42 – Outside Fredericton

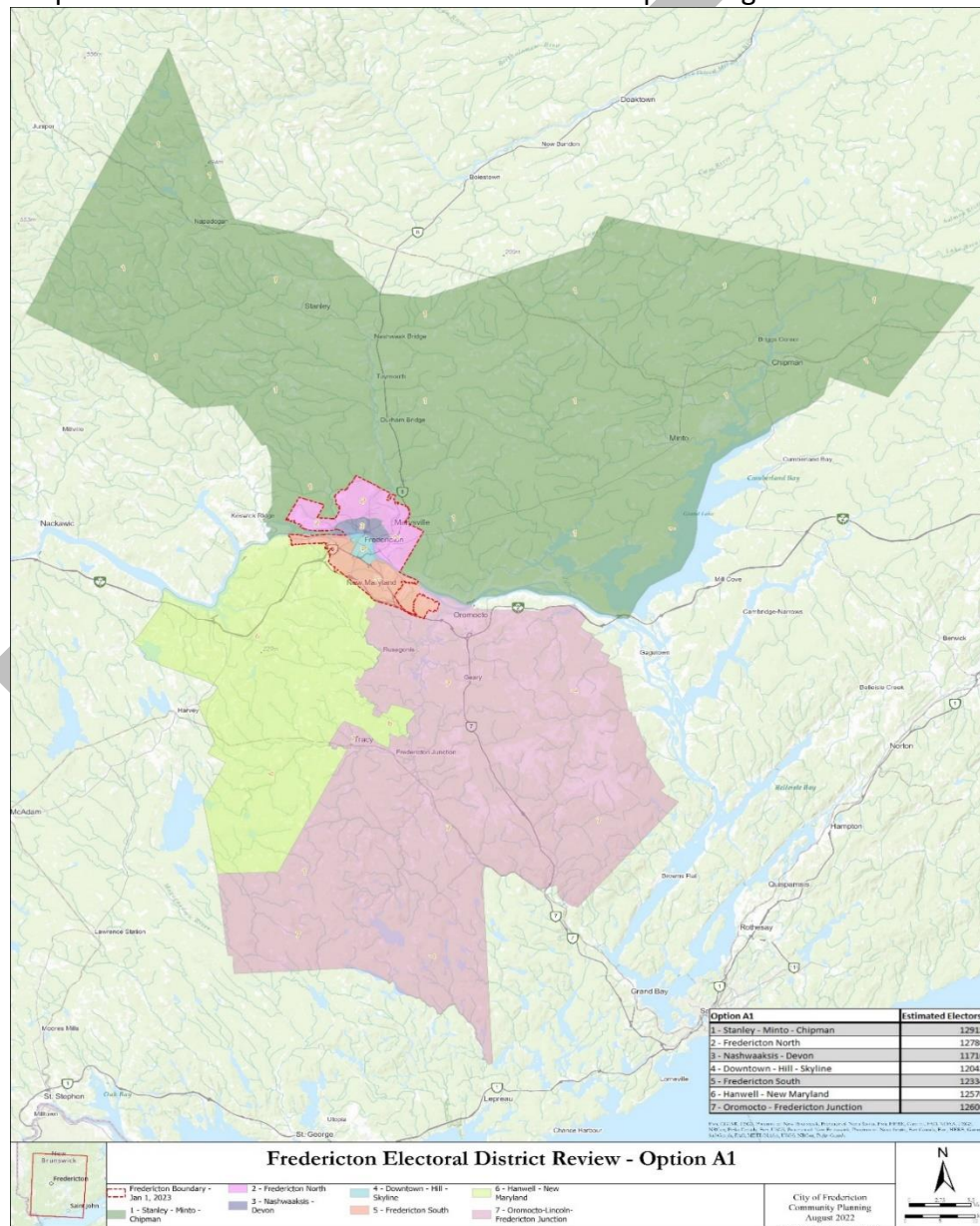
District 38 Outside City electors – 6,917
District 42 Outside City electors – 5,074
Total: 11,991

The above reconfiguration would 1) result in urban voters and rural voters being aligned with urban and rural electoral districts establishing more effective representation for matters of provincial concern; 2) ensure that communities of interest are combined

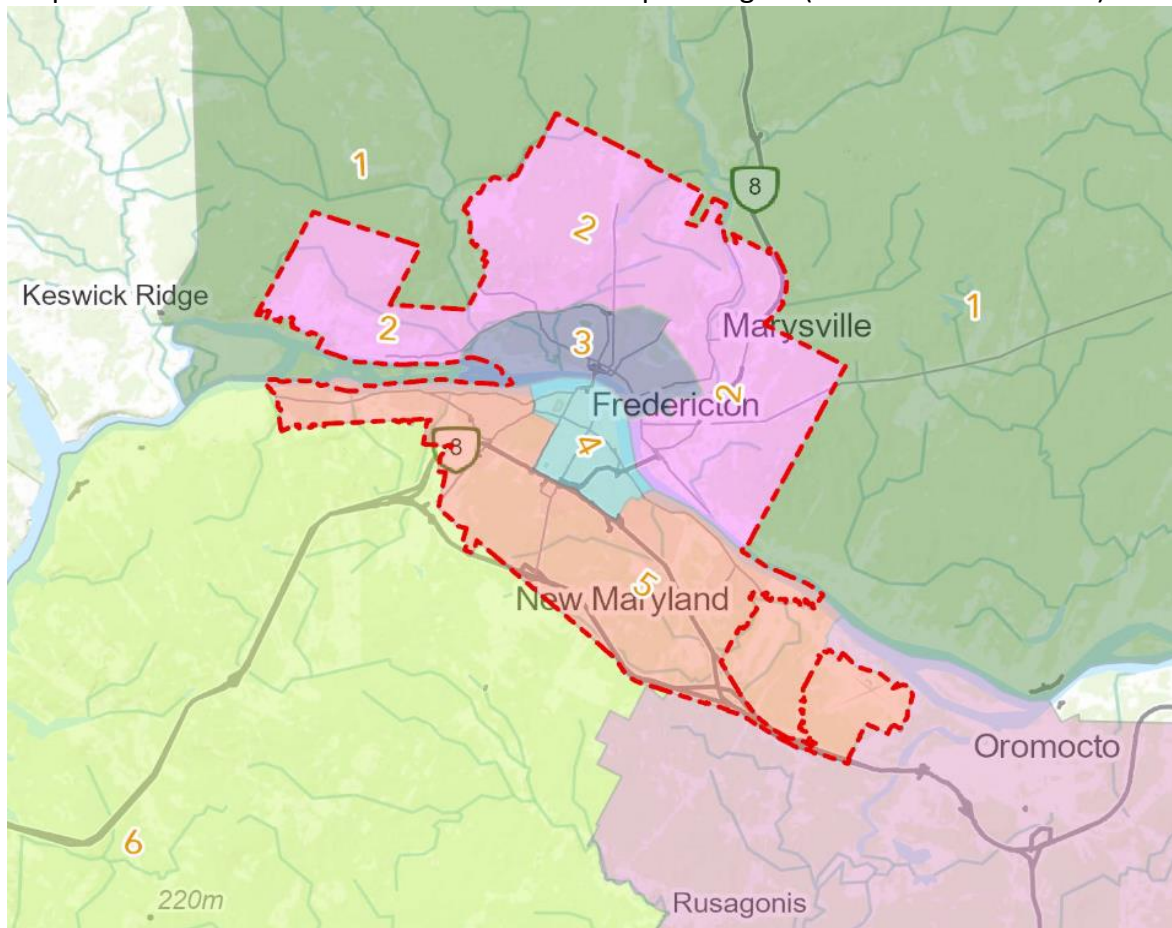
rather than divided; 3) would mitigate our concerns that the districts as currently proposed have not sufficiently accounted for the City's projected growth within the region; and, 4) improve the representation of Marysville, which is deserving of fair treatment.

And finally, we note that the requested alternative outlined above is generally consistent with Fredericton's proposed electoral district boundaries included with our previous letter and presentation to the Commission, and which we provide below for your information and reference:

Proposed Electoral District Boundaries for the Capital Region:



Proposed Electoral District Boundaries for the Capital Region (Fredericton area view):



Electoral quotient alignment based on the City's proposal:

Riding	Context	# Voters
1 - Stanley - Minto - Chipman	Rural	12,915
2 - Fredericton North	Urban	12,780
3 - Nashwaaksis - Devon	Urban	11,716
4 - Downtown - Hill - Skyline	Urban	12,043
5 - Fredericton South	Urban	12,334
6 - Hanwell - New Maryland	Rural	12,576
7 - Oromocto - Fredericton Junction	Rural	12,600

In closing, Fredericton's City Council supports the exercise of ensuring that electoral representation is aligned with the guiding principles as outlined in the *NB Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act*. As the urban centre of New Brunswick's Capital Region, and one of the fastest growing cities in Atlantic Canada, we emphasize the importance of a close working relationship with our provincial government. On behalf of Fredericton's City Council, we respectfully request that the Commission reconsider the electoral boundaries in the Capital Region as outlined in its Preliminary Report. We urge the Commission to ensure the electoral

districts more fully align with the Guiding Principles of the Act, and request that particular consideration be given to:

- Fredericton's urban nature;
- The respective value and importance of urban and rural representation; and,
- The recent and projected growth of both the Province and the City.

Fredericton City Council wishes to again thank the Commission for the opportunity to participate in this review process, as well as for your review and consideration of our concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely Yours,

Mayor Kate Rogers
City of Fredericton