



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

364 York Street, Suite 200
Fredericton, NB
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14 September 2022

Electoral Boundaries & Representation Commission
500 Beaverbrook Ct, Suite 200
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Via email: CommissionNB@gnb.ca

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the current electoral boundary review undertaken by the Province of New Brunswick through your commission. The work you have undertaken is important to maintaining democratic balance and fairness – key principles in our political system.

Thank you to the City of Fredericton for sharing much of the data contained in this document. Our organization endorses their position as outlined in their document dated 12 September 2022.

About the Chamber

Established in 1874, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based business-focused organization with more than 1000 members. The chamber is nationally accredited and our organizational vision is “*Stronger Community Through Business Prosperity*”.

The Fredericton chamber is actively engaged in policy development and advocacy that affects the competitiveness of our members and the Canadian business environment. The chamber’s board of directors is made up of volunteers representing various business sectors in our community. Board members have extensive experience and understanding which adds tremendous value to the organization. The chamber works closely with economic development organizations and all three levels of government to offer the perspective of chamber members.

The Capital Region

Currently, the Capital Region comprises eight ridings, of which only two could be classified as “urban” (Fredericton South and Fredericton North); one is “rural” (Carleton-York) and five are predominantly rural but include portions of the City of Fredericton (Oromocto-Lincoln-Fredericton, Fredericton-Grand Lake, New Maryland-Sunbury, Fredericton-York, and Fredericton West-Hanwell).

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Fredericton is the urban centre of New Brunswick's Capital Region, and one of the fastest growing cities in Atlantic Canada. Our organization submits that the Commission reconsider the electoral boundaries in the Capital Region, with particular consideration given to Fredericton's urban nature, as well as the recent growth of both the Province and the City.

Key Recommendation

That the Capital Region should include four ridings that are wholly within the City of Fredericton.

Other than language (which is arguably less relevant in the Capital Region than other areas of the province), our organization submits that the most relevant guiding principle to the day-to-day lives of New Brunswickers is whether they live in an urban or rural area. Of all of the relevant guiding principles, the urban/rural distinction is the one that people most actively choose for themselves and as such, are opting into a community of interest which should be respected through their governance. Although the focus of this submission is on urban areas, it should be noted that the current configuration of ridings in the Capital Region result in suboptimal representation for both rural and urban dwellers.

Supporting Information

Creating four wholly urban ridings within the City of Fredericton satisfies all of the guiding principles contained in section 11 of the *Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act*:

- Remaining with the prescribed electoral quotient
- Respecting bilingual representation
- Communities of interest
- Local government and other administrative boundaries
- The rate of population growth in a region
- Effective representation of rural areas
- Geographical features

Conversely, the present riding configuration marginalizes the voice of a significant portion of Fredericton's population. Placing a small number of Fredericton voters in five different rural ridings where they share little in common with those who live in the balance of each of those ridings is inconsistent with the spirit of the *Act*. In fact, approximately 50% of Fredericton residents live in a riding that is predominantly rural (and outside of their communities of interest).



This split is outlined in the following chart provided in the City of Fredericton’s submission dated:

Riding #	Riding	Total Electors	Urban Electors	Rural Electors	% Electors in City
37	Oromocto - Lincoln - Fredericton	12054	4348	7706	36.07%
38	Fredericton - Grand Lake	11644	4888	6756	41.98%
39	New Maryland - Sunbury	13724	1136	12588	8.28%
40	Fredericton South	11264	11264	0	100.00%
41	Fredericton North	11716	11716	0	100.00%
42	Fredericton - York	12856	7420	5436	57.72%
43	Fredericton West-Hanwell	12511	5137	7374	41.06%

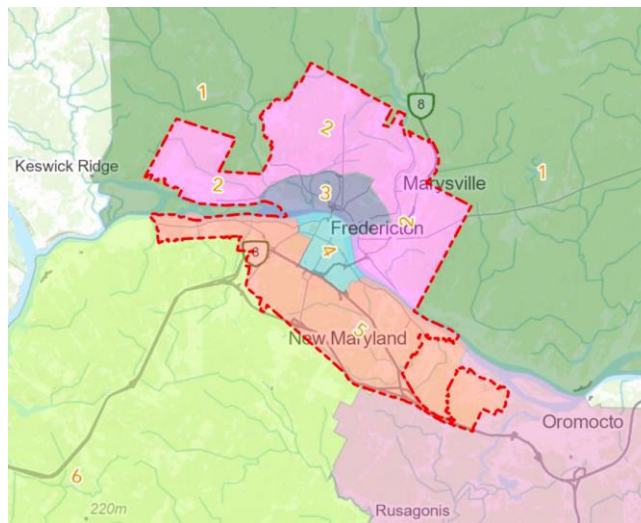
Notably, this split of urban/rural ridings did not take place in the same way in the province’s two other main urban centres – Moncton and Saint John. This has further put the Capital Region’s urban residents at a disadvantage in terms of electoral representation for the past decade. Specifically, current deficiencies from this perspective, include:

- The splitting of the historic and cohesive former town of Marysville into three ridings: 41-Fredericton North, 38-Fredericton- Grand Lake, and 42-Fredericton-York. The approach taken in 2013 creates a clear disconnect with respect to Marysville’s urban identity preventing effective representation. The current scenario places some urban voters east of the Nashwaak River in a riding that extends beyond Chipman, while others are part of the riding that includes the Village of Stanley.
- Fredericton residents living in the Lian Street/Valcour Drive area, another major growth node and one of the City’s fastest growing mixed-use areas, cast votes in District 39-New Maryland-Sunbury. These urban residents constitute only 8% of the population of the riding and are joined together with citizens residing in the rural community of Blissville, located approximately 40 km southeast of Fredericton.
- Fredericton residents living west of Smythe Street are part of district 43-Fredericton West-Hanwell. These urban residents do not share communities of interest with The Rural Community of Hanwell or Prince William.
- Fredericton residents living in the well-established urban neighbourhoods of Skyline Acres and Southwood Park are split into two different ridings, 40-Fredericton South and 37-Oromocto-Lincoln-Fredericton. The urban voice of those living in the southeastern quadrant of the City are diminished by constituting only 36% of the electorate in a riding focused on the Town of Oromocto.



The population of voters inside the 2023-2032 boundaries of the City of Fredericton allows for the creation of four electoral districts wholly contained within the City that fully meet the electoral quotient provisions of the Act (45,909 voters in the City, equating to 11,477 per riding in a four-riding model).

Our organization endorses the urban-focused ridings proposed by the City of Fredericton in their submission:



The City of Fredericton proposal allows for the creation of four urban ridings wholly contained within the City of Fredericton (apart from the addition of a small portion of Lincoln in the new Fredericton South riding). As shown in the table below, the ridings as proposed are consistent with the electoral quotient of 11,714 electors per electoral district (+/- 15%), while leaving some room for growth over the next ten years:

Riding	Number of Voters	Urban/Rural/Combination
Stanley - Minto - Chipman	12,915	Rural
Fredericton North	12,780	Urban
Nashwaaksis-Devon	11,716	Urban
Downtown-Hill-Skyline	12,043	Urban
Fredericton South	12,334	Urban
Hanwell-New Maryland	12,576	Rural
Oromocto-Fredericton Junction	12,600	Rural



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This proposed alignment would enhance the political representation of residents within each riding given the critical context of the urban/rural communities of interest. When it comes to government services, political representation and cultural alignment – this should be a key consideration for the commission.

Conclusion

We wish to thank the commission for accepting this difficult task. We support its mission of insuring equitable and relevant representation of all New Brunswickers in the legislature. We also appreciate the opportunity to present our position with the confidence that it will be considered fairly on its merits. We look forward to the Commission's final report.

Respectfully,

Morgan Peters, Policy Manager
Fredericton Chamber of Commerce