



LOCAL GOVERNEMENT REFORM - AN OVERVIEW

Restructuring at the local and regional levels is being led and supported by the provincial government. The implementation of local and regional structural reform has been divided into “restructuring projects” that have been assigned to various appointed transition facilitators. The transition facilitator plays a key role in the first critical year of the transformation of local governance in New Brunswick.

There are two categories of restructuring projects that have been assigned to transition facilitators:

- Local Governments
- Regional Service Commissions (RSC)

The transition for remaining local service districts to new rural districts will be the responsibility of the Department of Environment and Local Government. In all restructuring projects, it is vital to build upon successful existing programs and assets in each local government, local service district and region.

Local government restructuring

The transition facilitators are responsible for coordinating and overseeing various critical elements of the transition including, but not limited to:

- council composition and ward boundaries
- initial organizational structure and human resource matters
- change management processes
- legal considerations
- financial matters such as audits
- the preparation of first budgets
- working with community representatives to determine the new legal name and type of local government

The size of the transition team and their level of activity will vary and depend on the scale, complexity and type of restructuring that is to occur. Work on restructuring began early in 2022, with special elections/by-elections planned to take place where required in November 2022. The newly restructured local governments and rural districts will officially take effect on January 1, 2023. In the case of newly created local governments, the transition team will oversee the hiring of chief administrative officers of new local governments, who will be in place by September 1, 2022.

Regional restructuring

Changes to the regional service commissions are being led and supported by the provincial government through appointed transition facilitators. These facilitators will hire an individual to fill the new leadership role in each region and assist with such matters as:

- clarifying new functions
- coordinating linkages between the regional service commissions, provincial departments, and regional stakeholders in areas pertaining to the expanded mandate of the commissions
- supporting the initial development of regional strategies



- establishing the terms of reference of potential committees supporting the new functions
- assisting in change management processes

It is expected that the transition to the expanded regional service commission's mandate, combined with boundary alignment and changes to board composition (resulting from the local restructuring that occurs), will be completed by January 1, 2023.

Workload and Collaboration

The transition facilitators work closely with the staff of local governments and RSCs. In the new legislative framework, the transition facilitators will be the representative of new councils and administrators commencing in January 2022 for the duration of the calendar year.

Facilitators are supported in their roles by a central Project Management Office (PMO) located within the Local Government and Local Governance Reform team. The PMO staff coordinated the initial orientation, and provides direction to, and regular touch points with, the transition facilitators throughout the process, to monitor progress and share best practices. It is expected that transition facilitators will work collaboratively to encourage the highest quality outcome for the overall reform initiative while leveraging efficiencies across projects.

Some common tasks may be grouped and supported centrally through the PMO. For example, hiring an executive search firm to assist with managing the selection of new municipal Chief Administrative Officers and a new executive leadership position within the RSCs will be done by the PMO. Transition facilitators will support each job posting by providing local information that will complement the recruitment. Similarly, the PMO is coordinating with Elections NB the creation of new legal entity maps, with the transition facilitators confirming specific boundary limits, as required.

Advisory Committees

The most critical role of the transition facilitator will be assembling advisory committees to work on each restructuring project. Teams have been formed comprising local experts who understand the realities of the region in which they work and can provide professional advice to the newly formed or expanded entities. Transition facilitators are not expected to undertake all of the tasks required to meet the milestones within the prescribed timeline. Each transition facilitator will work with a committee of elected officials and a separate committee of administrators, including the rural district manager, on each project. They will have the opportunity to engage additional assistance as required, within the limits of the transition budget allocated for each project.

Not in Scope

Creating the new local governance structures in one year is going to be a significant undertaking. Other related changes will be implemented simultaneously and in later years and will be led by the new entities and their elected officials. For example, facilitators will not have to create new tax rates, new planning policies, or be involved with any centrally coordinated elements such as the creation of a new Independent Municipal Commission, unless separately negotiated.



Village of Doaktown Amalgamation Update for all Residents



On November 18, 2021, the provincial government released its White Paper on Municipal Reform "Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities". This reform will include the strategic local restructuring across New Brunswick resulting in a reduction of the number of entities from 340 to 90, which will have 78 local governments and 12 rural districts.

Our region, identified as Entity 23, proposes that the following communities amalgamate:

- Village of Doaktown
- Portion of the local service district of Blissfield (100%) (Known as the Parish of Blissfield)- excludes crown land.

To help with the undertaking of successfully executing the amalgamation process, the provincial government has assigned a Transition Facilitator to our entity.

We have now established an advisory committee consisting of the following:

Committee: 1 Mayor, 4 Councillors, Senior Staff and representatives from the Local Service Districts (one from each area: Storeytown , Hazelton , Blissfield and GrandLake Road/Bettsburg) and a representative from Department of Local Government.

Our first priority was to focus on municipal boundaries, the establishment of the new communities, the size of the new council and its type (wards or at-large systems). After meetings with the facilitator, please note the following:

Elections will be held in November 2022 and a new council will be required due to the following:

- In local governments where there is a population increase of more than 50% and /or two or more local governments are combined, there will be an election for the entire council.
- The Village of Doaktown's previous population was 792, adding the Parish of Blissfield of 451 gives us a total of 1243 or 57%.

The Committee has recommended the following for the new council:

- At Large – 5 Councillors
- At Large - 1 Mayor

The next phase of the process will include the following decisions:

- Decide Community type (Village/Town/Rural Community).
- Select (if need be)a New Community Name

As the municipal reform process unfolds, we will do our best to keep you informed and we will keep the best interest of all residents in mind while making these decisions.

Please watch for paper notices, website and facebook for any updates.