



Council

Municipality of the District of Clare
1185 Highway 1
Little Brook, NS
B0W 1M0

July 3, 2022

Re: Boundary Review Scenarios

Dear Council,

Thank you so much for your time and the feedback you provided after our presentation.

Based on the reaction we received at Council, we have considered a modified boundary scenario where New Edinburgh and Grosses Coques remain in District 1, and where Ohio, Margo and Weaver Settlement are returned to District 2. All other districts will remain as presented for this exercise.

While this scenario is still an option, our team is not comfortable with how far below parity this scenario would place District 2. We believe it will be difficult to justify this scenario to the NSUARB and could result in a rejection to your application. As such we have prepared another scenario which retains these changes but also alters some of the other districts to bring District 2 closer to parity.

It is our hope that this new Scenario will address the concerns presented to us by Council but provide an option that is more in line with the NSUARB Boundary Review Guidelines which we can move forward to Public Consultation with.

Looking forward to hearing your thoughts,

Raleigh King

This report has been reviewed and approved for quality assurance by Derek Robertson, Company Co-Founder

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approach.....	3
Figure 1: Original Boundary Recommendation Map	6
New Parity Scenario	7
Table 1: Electors by District – Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity.....	8
Figure 2: Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity	9
Conclusion.....	10

APPROACH

For the 2022 Boundary review, Council requested C+D Community Design support them in engaging the public to consider a Status Quo Scenario retaining the existing eight (8) Councillors under a Warden system.

The Nova Scotia Utility & Review Board (NSUARB) expects relative voter parity between the districts to be within +/-10% of the average¹. The approach our team took for the Clare Boundary Review was to alter the district boundaries to achieve +/-10% parity while also paying close attention to community boundaries and continuity. This approach was particularly difficult in District 1 with our team choosing to move New Edinburgh to District 2 to achieve parity without splitting any communities between districts (See Figure 1).

The result was New Edinburgh situated geographically separate from the rest of District 2. As noted in the earlier background report, The Municipality of Clare is one of few Municipalities within Nova Scotia which are predominately French language. We've observed that these municipalities tend to have a higher number of Councillors and Districts to constituents which we speculate is to accommodate their number of small and very community-oriented villages and neighbourhoods with varying needs. At the June Council Meeting, it was noted that New Edinburgh and the rest of District 1 are predominantly French communities and the communities remaining in District 2 are predominantly English communities. Due to these language requirements, it was suggested that constituents of new Edinburgh would have different language needs of their representing Councillor than the rest of District 2. For this reason, it was suggested that New Edinburgh be returned to District 1.

Our team presented a Second Scenario which included switching Grosses Coques from District 1 to District 2 and Weaver Settlement, and Ohio from District 2 to District 1. However, this presented a similar issue as Grosses Coques is primarily French and Weaver Settlement and Ohio are predominantly English.

Considering these factors, Council requested we investigate a scenario where:

- New Edinburgh and Grosses Coques remain in District 1.
- Ohio, Margo and Weaver Settlement are in District 2.
- All other districts remain as presented originally

*** Council also requested that our team consider making a case to the NSUARB for District 2 to be outside of recommended parity as a community of interest based on linguistic profile.

¹ <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/mandates/municipal-boundaries>

Based on Council's requests, the resulting Districts would contain the following communities:

District 1 (967 Electors) +11% Parity

- St Bernard 226
- Belliveaus Cove 292
- Grosses Coques 286
- New Edinburgh 163

District 2 (674 Electors) -24% Parity

- Weaver Settlement 93
- Hassett 75
- Southville 34
- Hilltown 89
- St. Joseph 72
- Havelock 59
- Easton 39
- New Tusket 69
- Corberrie 64
- Moodys Corner 8
- Briar Lake 9
- Richfield 21
- Ohio 38
- Margo 4

The result is District 1 rises to +11% placing it above the average number of electors and outside of parity. District 2 falls to -24% below the average number of electors and outside of parity. This would make District 2 farther outside of parity then it had been prior to this review. The NSUARB states the following regarding parity requirements:

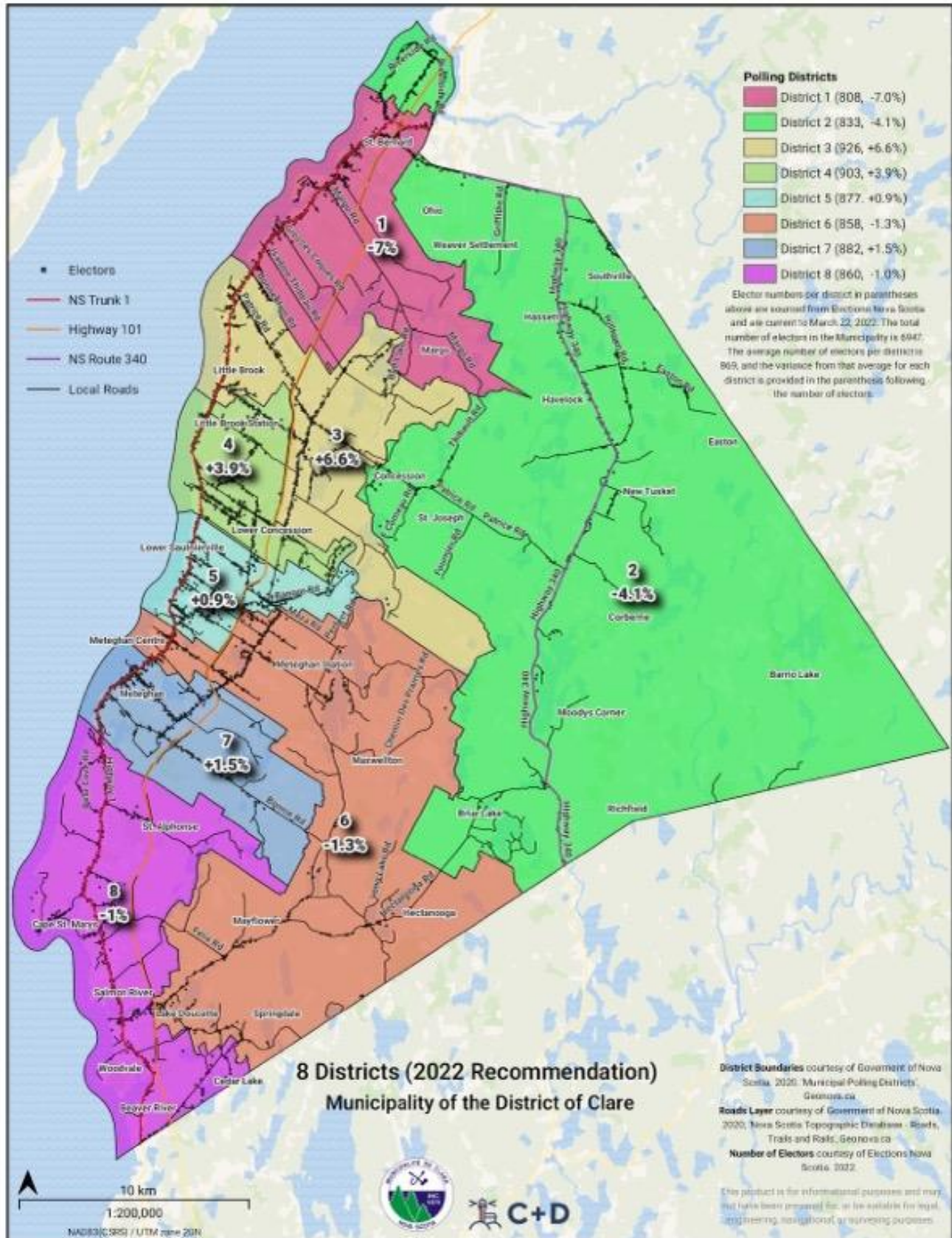
The Board expects variances for relative parity between polling districts to be within +/-10%, only allowing variances up to +/-25% in extraordinary circumstances where the Municipality, Town or CSAP has provided a detailed written explanation confirming that factors such as community of interest or geography clearly justify the necessity of an increased variance in a polling district. In such cases, it is incumbent upon an affected municipal unit or CSAP to clearly explain the reasons for such a high variation. The greater the variation, the greater the burden to justify the high variance from the average number of electors. Even with very extensive and detailed justification, the Board will approve a variation of +/-25% or more only in very extraordinary circumstances.²

² <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/mandates/municipal-boundaries>

C+D Community Design is concerned that moving forward into Public Consultation with two districts outside of suggested parity, and in particular District 2 so far out of parity could present an issue with the Municipality of Clare's Boundary Review Application come Fall. To build a strong case for community of interest, we must collect extensive public feedback in favour of this decision in addition to showing that all other viable options to address the special language considerations have been considered, which would include reducing the number of districts and Councillors.

For these reasons, we are recommending a new scenario that achieves suggested parity amongst districts that we would like to bring to public consultation. Findings from the public engagement process will return to Council for additional feedback before moving further along in the process. Should the public identify the issues that have been brought up by Council, or additional concerns, this feedback will be used to support the final application and decision that Council submits to the NSUARB. We feel this approach is the best to prevent any suggestion of leading or influencing the public. It is possible, that in the end, we recommend that Council apply to allow District 1 and District 2 be outside of parity guidelines as communities of interest due to language requirements, however we feel it's important that we collect as much data as possible and consider all other options first as the Board states that "Even with very extensive and detailed justification, the Board will approve a variation of +/- 25% or more only in very extraordinary circumstances". The Municipality of Clare has had Boundary Review Applications declined by the NSUARB in the past, we would like to prevent this from happening as much as possible by completing a thorough and impartial review.

Figure 1: Original Boundary Recommendation Map



NEW PARITY SCENARIO

Taking all of this into consideration, and with Council’s feedback in mind C+D Community Design began work on a new scenario (see Figure 2). We stated with our original recommendation (see Figure 1) and moved New Edinburgh back into District 1 and Margo back into District 2. As noted, this puts District 1 just above parity and District 2 well below parity.

District 1 only has the four communities of St Bernard, Belliveaus Cove, New Edinburgh, and Grosses Coques. All four communities are sizable therefore moving any one of them can significantly affect parity ratios. Ideally none of these communities would be moved into District 2 given they are predominantly French. District 1 also borders District 3 which is likewise predominantly French. However, District 3 is already at +6.6% parity and could not accept the neighbouring community of Grosses Coques without significant changes to the rest of the District.

The boundary of Grosses Coques and Church Point is the Bonnenfant Rd, electors on the Southwest side of Bonnenfant Rd are in Church Point District 3 and electors on the North East Side are in Grosses Coques District 1.

For this reason, our team is advising to move the 21 Grosses Coques electors located on the North East side Bonnenfant Rd in to District 3 in order to achieve the recommended parity standard. The result is District 1 falls to 946 electors (+8.9% parity), and District 3 rises to 947 electors (+9% parity).

To bring District 2 up to parity, Hectanooga and Springdale from District 6 will be placed in District 2. Cedar Lake from District 8 will also be placed in District 2. District 6 will now be slightly below parity, therefore the communities of Briar Lake and Moodys Corner will be moved from District 2 to District 6. The result of this is District 2 rises to 795 electors (-8.6% parity), District 6 falls to 785 electors (-9.7% parity), and District 8 falls to 812 electors (-6.6% Parity).

District 1 (946 Electors)

- St Bernard 226
- Belliveaus Cove 292
- New Edinburgh 163
- Grosses Coques 286 (- 21 electors on North East side of Bonnenfant Road)

- Ohio 38
- Hectanooga 56
- Springdale 34
- Cedar Lake 48

District 2 (795 Electors)

- Southville 34
- Hilltown 89
- St. Joseph 72
- Havelock 59
- Easton 39
- New Tusket 69
- Corberrie 64
- Richfield 21
- Margo 4
- Hassett 75
- Weaver Settlement 93

District 3 (947 Electors)

- Church Point 346
- Concession 366
- Little Brook 170
- Church Point Station 13
- Lower Concession 31
- North East side of Bonnenfant Road +21 (from Grosses Coques)

District 4 (903 Electors)

- Comeauville 235
- Little Brook Station 92
- Saulnierville 281
- Saulvierville Station 295

District 5 (877 Electors)

- Bangor 166
- Lower Saulnierville 289
- Meteghan River 353
- St. Benoni 69

District 6 (785 Electors)

- Meteghan Centre 210
- Meteghan Station 374
- Mayflower 89
- Lake Doucette 74
- Maxwellton 21
- **Moody's Corner 8**

- **Briar Lake 9**

District 7 (882 Electors)

- St. Martin 240
- Meteghan 642

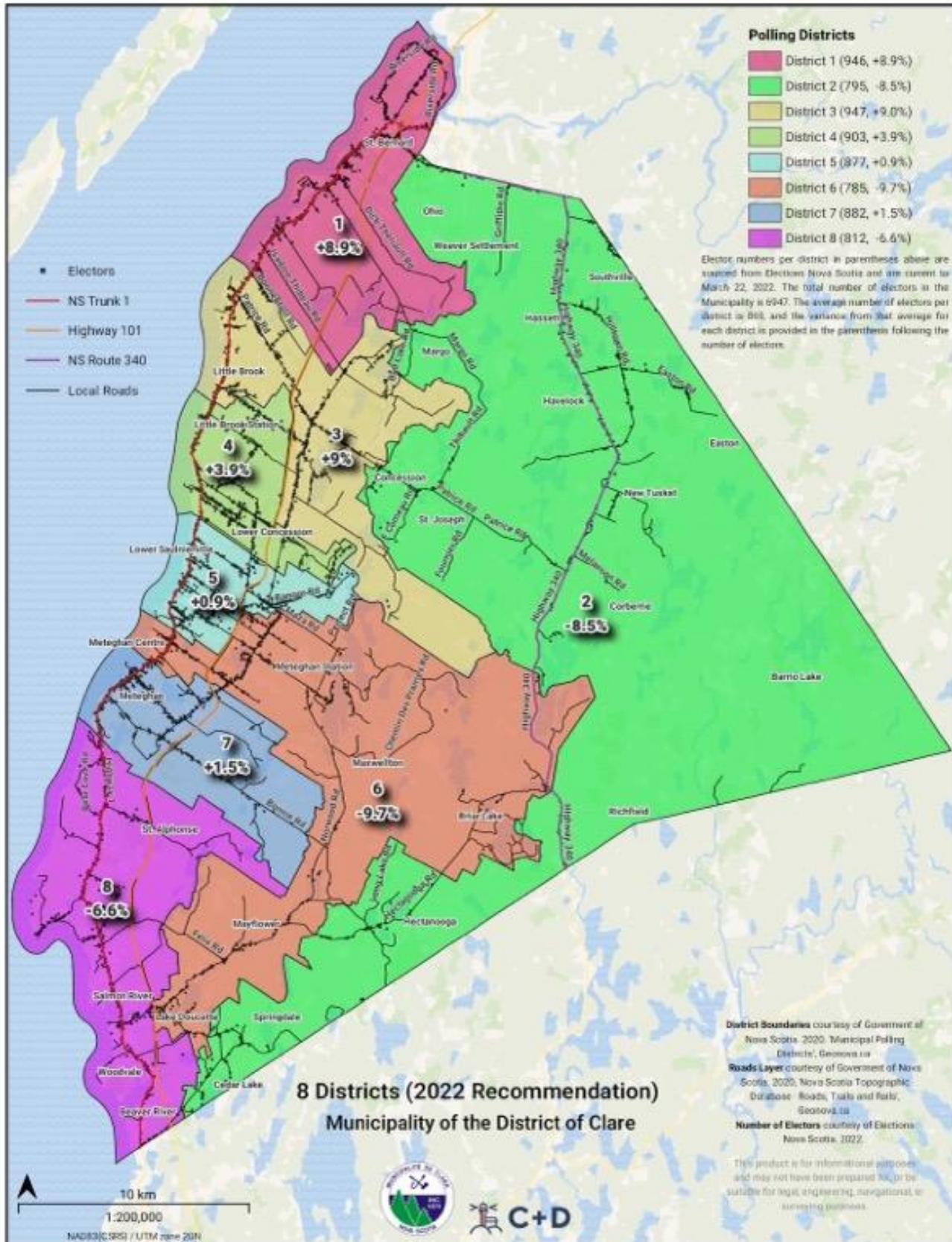
District 8 (812 Electors)

- Beaver River 66
- Cape St. Marys 59
- Mavillette 194
- Salmon River 201
- Woodvale 58
- St. Alphonse 234

Table 1: Electors by District – Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity

District	# of Electors	% of the total number of electors	Average number of electors per Councillor	# to which excess or is less than the average number of electors per Councillor	% to which excess or is less than the average number of electors per Councillor
District 1	946	13.6%	869	77	8.9%
District 2	795	11.4%		-74	-8.5%
District 3	947	13.7%		78	9%
District 4	903	13%		34	3.9%
District 5	877	12.6%		8	0.9%
District 6	785	11.3%		-84	-9.7%
District 7	882	12.7%		13	1.5%
District 8	812	11.6%		-57	-6.6%
Total	6945				

Figure 2: Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity



CONCLUSION

Our Team feels that the above updates to our original scenario recommendations will improve overall community continuity by retaining the French community of New Edinburgh in District 1, even with the split of 21 electors from Grosses Coques into District 3. It is our hope that Council understands and agrees with our reasoning behind this decision and is happy with the resulting Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity.

We are busy preparing the public consultation materials for the Municipality of the District of Clare Boundary Review. We hope to begin consulting the community on Updated Boundary Recommendation for Parity in the next few weeks, implementing our consultation throughout this summer. After the consultation is complete, we will return to Council with our community findings and recommendations for moving forward with a NSUARB Boundary Review Application.

“Public consultation is an inherent component of the study to be conducted by council. The form and extent of public consultation is within council’s discretion, depending on the circumstances existing in each case. However, the consultation should be of a type and degree which allows members of the public an opportunity to express their views on the size of their council, upon the location of boundaries for town wards or municipal polling districts, or whether a town should be divided into wards, should that be applicable. Allowing the public, the opportunity to provide its valuable input is a key component of the decision-making process leading to an application by a municipality or town”. - NSUARB
