
Q&A – Local Municipal Reform

Transition teams:

1. **Who will be the facilitators from the transition teams?**
2. **Will the department of ELG ensure that the future facilitators of the transition teams have significant background and experience in local governance?**

Facilitators are being appointed by the minister to lead the transition teams, and their work will begin in January 2022. They will have extensive experience in public administration.

3. **How many transition teams will there be for the entire province?**

Four facilitators will be hired for the RSCs, and a minimum of 10 will be hired for local governments.

4. **Since municipal administrators know really well the different roles and the realities within their municipalities, could they be directly implicated in the Transition Team?**

Municipal administrators have experience and expertise not just in how local governments operate, but also in the strengths and challenges in their communities. They will play an important role in this process.

5. **What will be the full power of the future facilitators in the Transition Teams?**

These facilitators will be responsible for co-ordinating 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 managements processes;
- legal considerations;
- financial matters such as audits, and
- the preparation of first budget.

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.

6. Will the organizational structure of the new entity be reviewed with the current or future municipal administrators?

Yes – as noted in question 9 below.

7. What will the hiring process for municipal administrators look like?

In the case of newly created local governments, the transition teams will oversee the hiring of clerks and/or chief administrative officers of new local governments, who will be in place by September 1, 2022.

8. Will the future municipal administrators be responsible for hiring candidates for the remaining positions?

Yes - once administrators are hired, they will take on these other hiring responsibilities, as of September 1, 2022.

9. What will be the roles of the Councils and municipal administrators with the Transition Teams?

The facilitators will form advisory committees made up of municipal council and LSD representatives, and officials' committees made up of municipal staff (e.g. CAOs, Clerks, etc.) and rural district managers (formerly known as local service managers). They will also bring in additional support as required in the areas of human resources and legal matters.

10. What percentage of their time shall municipal administrators invest during their week to help put in place the many elements coming from the municipal reform?

At this point, the amount of time that municipal staff will need to work with the transition team hasn't been established. Once the transition facilitators begin their work early in 2022, it will be part of their mandate to plan out the process and the details on the amount of time that will be needed by all transition team members.

11. Will the Transition Teams be responsible for making sure there is plenty of staff to implement all the changes and that all municipal employees have jobs and are happy in their new roles?

While their work function may change, one of the guiding principles that will be provided to the transition facilitator and team is to do everything reasonable to ensure existing staff have a role within the organization. In the exceptional circumstances where that is not possible, the next principle would be to try and

do so through attrition. Job loss will be a last resort.

12. What will happen to municipalities that do not have the same collective agreements and pension funds for their employees?

The transition teams will bring in additional HR and legal resources as required for these types of matters.

Services:

13. Will each new municipal entity be responsible for handling their Emergency Planning, Policing and Fire department? If so, what is the timeline for this?

Each new entity will be responsible for overseeing their Emergency Planning, Policing and Fire Service. However, given the synergies that can be found in planning and coordinating these services, regional service commissions will have a mandate to establish Public Safety committees with specific roles as outlined on page 21 in the white paper.

14. For our roads, how will the collaboration work with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Will they listen to our needs and timelines?

Roads currently in local service districts will remain the responsibility of the provincial government, whether part of or all the local service district is merged with a local government or becomes part of a rural district. This policy will also apply to restructuring undertaken after the current reform initiative. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) will develop a working relationship with the local governments to discuss their priorities. In addition, rural district representatives will work through their rural district manager to communicate their priorities to DTI. The ability to invest additional local property tax dollars on priorities related to roads will be enabled.

15. Could you clarify on page 30- point 4.7.2 Cost of Roads?

The new entities will not be responsible for the costs, and will not be the owners, of the roads that are within the former LSDs that will be part of a new entity. The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure will continue to provide this service. The actual taxation structure that exists in LSDs to provide for the cost of roads, where owner occupied properties pay 0.4115 per 100\$ of assessment, will continue to exist. This is similar to how the taxation structure works for former LSDs within a rural community at the moment. That taxation structure for road related services in former LSD will exist whether the new entity chooses to be a rural community, a village, or a town. This will be revisited as part of Phase 2 of

the finance and taxation reforms slated for 2025.

RSCs:

- 16. Will the officials committee for the boards of the RSCs include administrators of Local Governments? We think it is very important to make sure elected officials are getting the advice and input from these professionals. If not, we would recommend administrators have a role within the RSCs.**

Boards of the RSCs will include mayors of local governments (deputy mayors or a council member may be designated as alternates); and a councillor(s) of the rural district advisory committee. The board will be supported by an officials committee, which will be composed of administrators and staff of local governments and the rural district manager.

- 17. Is it really necessary to expand the executive team of the RSCs? Couldn't the Executive Director take that role and just hire more staff?**

Enhancing leadership capacity is necessary and prudent, given the expanded mandate of the RSCs. It will require executive oversight and a specialized skillset to lead the organization.

- 18. Is it possible to get a clarification on the voting formula for RSCs?**

As noted in the white paper, a weighted voting formula (based on population) will be implemented to further improve the operation of the regional service commission boards and reflect a democratic balance when voting on service-related matters. We believe this will be the most effective approach to ensure fair balance of the interests of New Brunswickers.

Local land use planning:

- 19. How soon can we have detailed maps, so we know exactly what is included in our municipal entity?**

The GIS teams are working on the map planning process now. Maps will be distributed as they are completed, likely early in the new year. Legal maps with final boundaries will be set in regulation by June 30, 2022.

- 20. What is the timeline to only have registered planners? There is currently a shortage of people in these positions so may be difficult to recruit.**

We are aware of the imminent shortage of qualified planners across the province. In instances where gaps may exist, we encourage local governments and RSCs to collaborate and leverage on planning services with their neighbouring local governments and RSCs. We also expect planning consultants from other jurisdictions to play a role in the interim to assist in the development of land use plan and even endorse the plan if required. Currently, given our virtual work environment, local governments hire planning consultants from across Canada to assist them in the development of plans. We are also discussing an attraction and retention strategy with the NB Association of Planners to target Atlantic Canadian universities.

21. The new conditions to withdraw from planning seems like a lot of negative if the municipality does not want to participate in the RSC planning services.

These new conditions will be in place to provide financial security for the communities retaining the RSC service who may be impacted by the decisions taken by a local government that has opted out of planning services..

22. What will happen to municipalities that are currently removed from RSC planning services?

They will continue to provide their own service through their current arrangement as long as that adheres to the requirements.

Financial

23. How will the financial reserves of current municipalities be handled?

Each former community will retain its own prior debts and/or reserves, and it will be addressed in Regulation.

24. Should the strategic plan and the 2022 budget be completely put aside?

The 2022 local government budgets will remain in place as the incorporation of new local governments will come into effect on January 1, 2023. Strategic planning – more specifically, identifying of priorities - should continue. The transition teams will work with local governments to consider inclusion of plans and priorities that have been developed.

25. Will some restriction be put in place to limit ongoing projects to control development prior to amalgamation?

The department is exploring what tools and approaches we currently have in place under the *Community Planning Act*. This will clarify the issue of whether the authority exists for the Minister to impose controls or whether amendments would need to be considered.

26. Will there be financial help for the upcoming years for municipal entities who are taking over some regions that are not in as good financial shape as them?

The entities are going to pay for the services they benefit from. Most of those costs are covered today. LSDs and municipalities are required to have balanced budgets as we speak.

27. Will the new formula for the Community and Equalization Grant be developed for budget 2023?

The provincial government will introduce amendments to the Community Funding Act in the first half of 2022 to be implemented by January 1, 2023.

28. Will the geographic size of the municipal entities be taken into consideration for the future Equalization Grant formula?

The development of a new formula will take into consideration the new local governance structures, their new fiscal environment, and will be guided by generally accepted Principles of Public Finance, such as equity, neutrality, predictability, viability, and simplicity.

Entities:

29. Why were certain local governments not restructured while others were?

The scope and type of restructurings are not reflective of a “one size fits all” approach, given that local circumstance vary throughout regions of New Brunswick.

30. Why must the name of the entity be chosen before the elections, why not leave this choice to the newly elected officials?

The transition facilitators will work with representatives of the communities that will make up the new local governments, to determine the type and legal name by July 1, 2022. Entity names must be determined by that time as they will have to be established in the regulations, which will come into force as of January 1, 2023. There is a process for a community to change its name if a new council determines it to be desirable.