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9 May 2025

Local Governance Commission
HSBC Place
520 King Street
Fredericton, NB E3B 6G3
LGC-CGL@gnb.ca

Subject: Request for Incorporation as a Town

Dear Members of the Local Governance Commission:

The Council for Eastern Charlotte has prepared a proposal requesting incorporation as a Town.

Eastern Charlotte was created through the *Local Governance Reform Act* (2021), amalgamating a village, a town, and all or portions of several Local Service Districts. At the time, this new local government was given the designation of a rural community. Council made its first steps for this change in its first Regular Meeting on January 18, 2023, and has continually pursued the change with the Minister of Local Government.

The attached proposal outlines additional notes regarding reform in the area; rationale for incorporation based on history, population, and responsibilities; expected impacts of incorporation; Council's plan for public input and opinion; as well as several benefits to the Government of New Brunswick.

We appreciate the role of the Local Governance Commission in reviewing our request and making a recommendation to the Minister. If the Commission should require additional information, please contact our Chief Administrative Officer, Jason N. Gaudet, via mail (1 School Street, St. George, NB, E5C 3N2), email (jason.gaudet@easterncharlotte.ca), or phone (506-755-4320).

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to the Commission's response.

Sincerely,

John D. Craig
Mayor



Eastern Charlotte Request for Incorporation as a Town

For submission to the Local Governance Commission

9 May 2025

Eastern Charlotte requests to be incorporated as a *Town*.

Background

The local government entity of Eastern Charlotte was created as a result of the Province of New Brunswick's *Local Governance Reform Act*, taking effect on January 1, 2023.

This new entity was formed by amalgamating all or portions of the following areas: *

- The Town of St. George (100 %)
- The Village of Blacks Harbour (100 %)
- Local Service District of Beaver Harbour (100 %)
- Local Service District of Fundy Bay (100 %)
- Local Service District of Pennfield (92 %)
- Local Service District of St. George (80 %)
- Local Service District of St. Patrick (20 %)

** (Working together for vibrant and sustainable communities (White Paper), Environment and Local Government (Province of New Brunswick), 2021-2022, page 57)*

At the time of Reform, the two primary centers of population were operating as existing incorporated municipalities, one Town and one Village, offering services in conjunction with those designations. Additionally, the population of the new entity is significantly higher than that of the individual former municipalities amalgamated into it.

The designation “rural community” of the entity was discussed with representatives of the public during consultations with representatives of the Province to facilitate the implementation of Reform. This was done without the input or presence of current municipal staff who could have explained the difference in services offered by the entity and any implications regarding funding for the entity.

Additionally, classification as a rural community carries implications when collaborating with Provincial departments which can cause confusion on both sides. Roles and expectations, based on the operation of pre-existing and new bylaws, can face obstacles when requests are reviewed from the Province's understanding of Eastern Charlotte as a rural community.

Therefore, Eastern Charlotte requests to be incorporated as a “town” so that its mandate as a local government would reflect its population and levels of service, to the effect of ensuring the continued delivery of services provided within the former municipalities while providing for its future development as a community, to the prosperity of its citizens.

Rationale

• *History of Incorporation*

As previously mentioned, the primary centers of population and commerce in Eastern Charlotte were previously incorporated municipalities.

The Town of St. George was founded in 1784 and incorporated in 1904. The Village of Blacks Harbour was incorporated in 1972 and celebrated its 50th Anniversary during the final year of incorporation.

The process of amalgamation stripped these historic communities of their incorporations without creating a new incorporation in their place. Instead of one new municipality, they were given a designation of rural community, something less than a municipality as defined by the Local Governance Act: “ ‘municipality’ means a city, town or village.”

- *Population Qualification*

According to subsection 22(3) of the *Local Governance Act*, “The residents of an area with a population of at least 1,500 may be incorporated as a town.” The population of Eastern Charlotte, based on the 2021 Census, is 7,325.

- *Clarification of Responsibility*

The relationship between Eastern Charlotte and Provincial departments requires clarification. In some cases, Eastern Charlotte requests are stalled or passed around as a result of the uncertainty created for Provincial staff when a “rural community” acts like a village or town.

Eastern Charlotte enacted a new Dangerous and Unsightly Premises bylaw in 2023. When bylaw enforcement resulted in the demolition and disposal of a structure, the request for reimbursement has stalled. This has resulted in frustration for a Council as monies remain outstanding between fiscal years, and members hesitate to continue enforcement when there are outstanding costs from previous files.

Impacts Resulting from Incorporation

The **Boundaries** of Eastern Charlotte would remain unaffected by the change. “Appendix A” shows the boundaries of Eastern Charlotte as created by *New Brunswick Regulation 2022-50 of the Local Governance Act (O.C. 2022-228)*, and effective as of January 1, 2023.

As such, the **Population** of Eastern Charlotte will not change. According to the 2021 Census, the population is 7,325.

Eastern Charlotte’s **Tax Base** will also remain unchanged. For the 2025 fiscal year, the Tax Base is \$829,278,190.

There shall be no change in **Services** provided by Eastern Charlotte. As previously mentioned, Council has taken steps to ensure the services required by an incorporated entity are offered, including those related to:

- Animal control services (contracted by New Brunswick SPCA);
- Solid waste collection (contracted by Fero and Southern Sanitation) and disposal services (in partnership with the Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission);
- Police protection services (contracted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in partnership with the Province);

- Dangerous and Unsightly Premises (in partnership with the Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission);
- Fire protection services (local volunteer fire department).

Public Consultation

The Council for Eastern Charlotte understands the value of including residents in this process. Therefore, Council shall take the following steps:

- *Public Notice*

Eastern Charlotte staff will provide public notice regarding each of the efforts listed below, to help maximize participation in the consultation process.

Notices shall be posted via the following outlets:

- Eastern Charlotte website (easterncharlotte.ca)
- Eastern Charlotte Facebook page (facebook.com/EasternCharlotte)
- Eastern Charlotte X.com account (x.com/EastCharlotteNB)
- Eastern Charlotte Instagram account (instagram.com/munieasterncharlotte)
- Municipal Office lobby (1 School Street, St. George)
- Magaguadavic Place Community Center lobby (11 J.O. Spinney Drive, St. George)

- *Step 1: Town Hall Meetings*

Council will invite residents to participate in an open discussion with Council and Staff regarding the change in classification at a **Public Town Hall**. Two Public Town Halls will be scheduled, one in each of the former municipalities, to be held within a thirty (30) day period.

- *Step 2: Accepting Written Opinions*

Additionally, Council will set a timeframe of thirty (30) days for residents to **offer a written opinion** to Council for consideration. This window will open within ten (10) days of the first Public Town Hall.

Benefits to the Province

Council firmly believes the incorporation of Eastern Charlotte is in the best interest of its citizens, as well as the Province.

Despite its rural setting, the residents of the former municipalities are dependent upon the current services, have an expectation for their expansion, and seek the addition of new services as a result of the increase in population and territory brought through Local Governance Reform. Continuing as a Rural Community will result in an increased call from residents and Council to have essential services fulfilled by the Province where there is provision and/or mandate for such.

An example of such services is that of Dangerous and Unsightly Premises (DAUP) complaints. When Reform was implemented in 2023, the Province was responsible for DAUP in the five Local Service Districts incorporated into Eastern Charlotte. Council passed an entity-wide, local bylaw for DAUP in

June 2023. Since then, more than 50 cases have been worked at the local level. This benefited residents by resolving their concerns in a timely manner. Additionally, it saved the Province the expense of having someone investigate complaints and engage with owners for remediation; expenses including staff salary, travel and meal expenses, correspondence, and time.

Another example of the Province's connection to service is through land-use planning. Though the Regional Service Commission would assist the local government with the formation of a Rural Plan for a Rural Community, it would fall on the Province to ratify the initial plan, as well as any subsequent amendments. Instead, this could be addressed at a local level with a Municipal Plan, as afforded to a Town.

Closing

Incorporating the local government of Eastern Charlotte recognizes the history of the existing communities amalgamated in the creation of the entity:

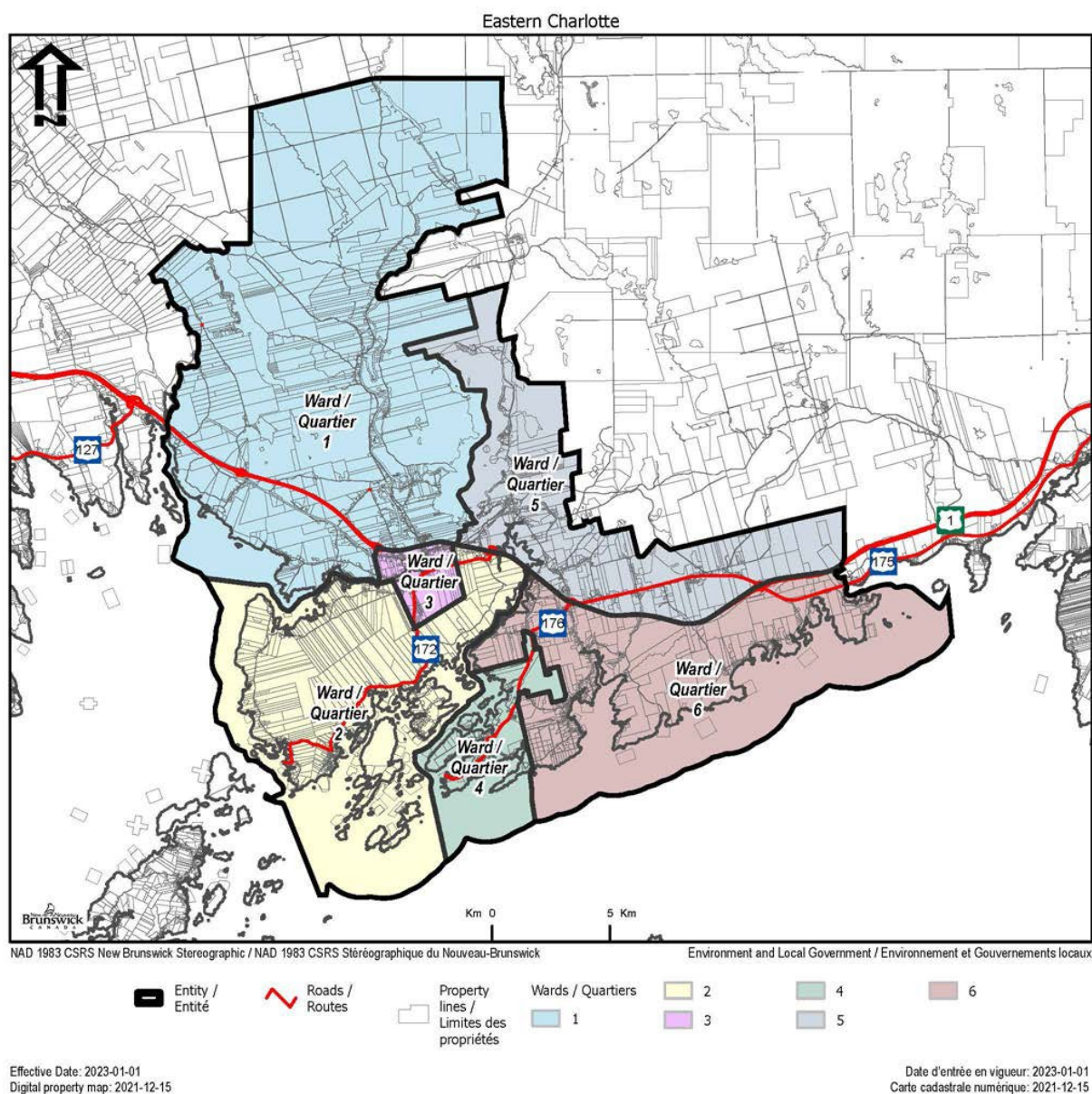
- The Village of Blacks Harbour, incorporated from 1972 through 2022, 50 years.
- The Town of St. George, incorporated from 1904 through 2022, 118 years.

Incorporation is also a forward move, helping to complete the commitment and goals of Local Governance Reform. Consider the case presented in the Province's documents related to Reform:

- In 2021, a Green Paper was to communicate the case for Local Governance Reform included a statement from then-Minister of Local Government: "Our local governance system no longer meets the needs of many New Brunswickers or their communities. Our current system, which has its roots in the 1960s, creates duplication of services and infrastructure" (page 1).
- One of the principles listed as guiding the process for Reform states: "The identity of communities will be respected, including their language, culture, sense of place and history, while reducing the number of local governance entities" (page 5).
- Additionally, the Green Paper emphasized: "A vibrant and sustainable community offers essential services at a level that meets the needs and expectations of residents and visitors" (page 12).
- When the White Paper followed in 2022 it explained the strategy behind and types of restructuring, the second being: "Merging of local governments together along with local service districts, or portions of them, to form larger local governments" (page 7).

It is, therefore, in the spirit of Local Governance Reform, bringing together individual parts to form one larger body of cooperation, to formally incorporate Eastern Charlotte as a Town.

Appendix A: Map of Eastern Charlotte Boundaries



Source:

New Brunswick Regulation 2022-50 of the Local Governance Act (O.C. 2022-228), Schedule 67.