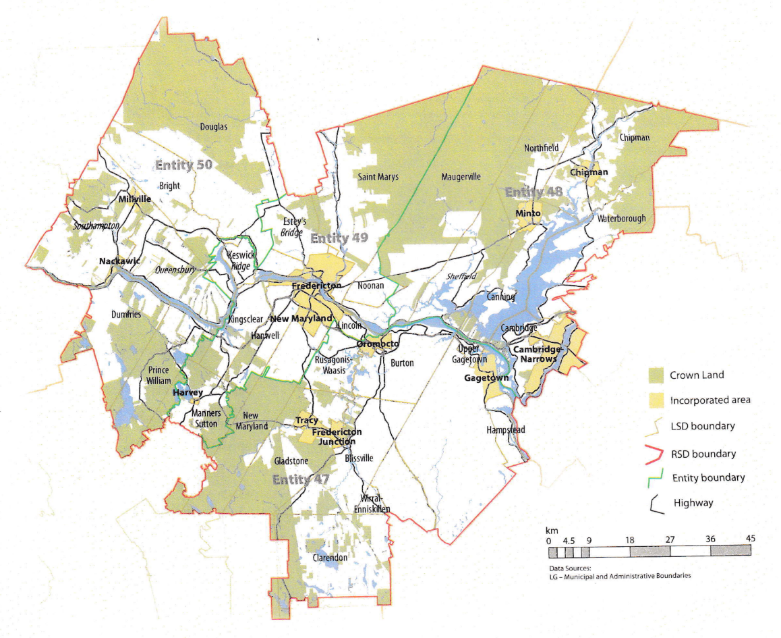
An Image of the Future – Entity 47 and Regional Service District 11

To illustrate the benefits of this new framework, take the example of Entity 47. For the duration of this discussion the municipality shall be referred to as Entity 47, as while the municipality could conceivably adopt the name Oromocto, Gagetown, or Fredericton Junction, the naming of the 53 municipal entities remains a task for the citizens of each proposed entity.[[1]](#footnote-2) Leaving the name of each entity undetermined is an important measure for the development of sustainable new municipal identities to compliment those of the existing towns, villages, and LSDs.

**Geographic Boundaries**

Entity 47 would be comprised of the Town of Oromocto, the Villages of Fredericton Junction, Tracy, and Gagetown, and the Clarendon, Wirral-Enniskillen, New Maryland, Rusagonis-Waasis, Burton, Upper Gagetown, Hampstead, Gladstone, and Blissville LSDs.

**Demographic Base**

The total population of the municipality would be approximately 25000 people – an increase of 3% from 2011. In accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, Entity 47 would not be required to operate bilingually because the Francophone minority is less than 20% of the overall population.

As it stands today, 55% of the proposed entity’s population live in unincorporated areas and are accordingly without representative local government. In addition to the lack of democratic institutions, the lack of incorporated municipal entities means that there is no land use planning to coordinate economic development. Amalgamation into Entity 47 would therefore benefit the residents of the effected LSDs by enabling them to use the resources they possess and control this development through local representative institutions.

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| **Voter Turnout by Existing Municipality** | | |
| **Municipality** | **Voter Participation 20121** | **Voter Participation 2016** |
| Fredericton Junction | 39.8% | 50.6% |
| Tracy | acclaimed | 53.9% |
| Oromocto | 35.7% | 20.1% |
| Gagetown | 56.4% | 49.0% |
| 1. Elections NB | | |

In addition, amalgamation would benefit the proposed entity’s existing municipality’s democratic institutions. Overall, the proposed entity’s four existing municipalities suffer from a variety of democratic shortcomings. Three of the four municipalities had voter participation rates of approximately 50% in the 2016 quadrennial election. These rates were all above the provincial average, but when the results of the previous election and subsequent by-elections are considered, the health of the municipalities’ democratic institutions is far more questionable. Fredericton Junction and Tracy both saw significant improvements from 2012 to 2016 with one increasing its voter participation by ten points and the other recovering from an election by acclamation. These results also indicate a certain instability though. Oromocto has the biggest challenge, however, as its already low voter participation dropped by 15 points between 2012 and 2016.

The solution for the municipalities of proposed Entity 47 is therefore to expand incorporation and suffrage to contiguous LSDs. Expanding the electorate creates a greater competition of interests, leading to better accountability. As has been witnessed in many Rural Communities, voter turnout among previously unincorporated populations is reasonably high, indicating that the inclusion of contiguous unincorporated populations can improve voter turnouts in existing municipalities.

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| **Status of By-Elections for Mayors and/or Councillors** | | |
| **Municipality** | **2018 By-Election(s)** | |
| **Mayor** | **Councillor** |
| Fredericton Junction | Acclaimed | Contested |
| Tracy | N/A | Acclaimed, 2 Contested |
| Oromocto | N/A | N/A |
| Gagetown | N/A | N/A |
| 1. Elections NB | | |

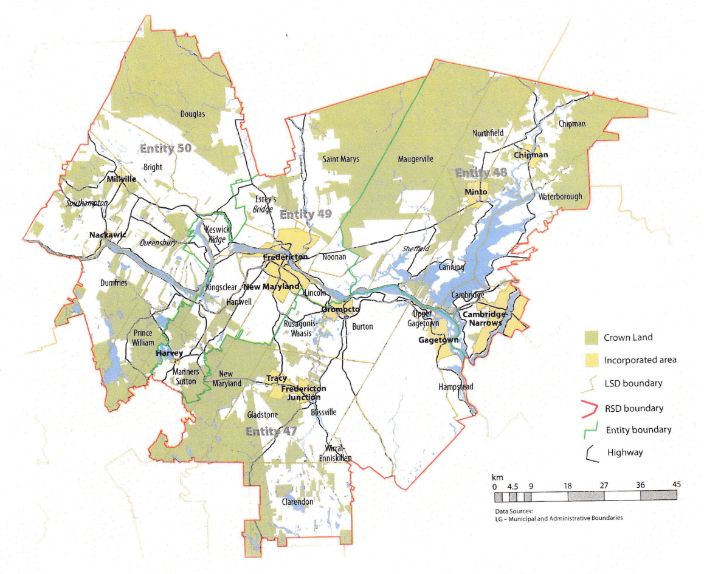
**Financial Base**

Entity 47 would also have a financial base capable of service provision beyond a simple aggregation of the assessed value of each constituent municipality and LSD. Under the new framework, municipal revenues will come from a combination of equalization payments from the provincial government, municipal property taxes, and other user fees related to services like water and wastewater usage.

Because its population is above 10000, Entity 47 would qualify as a ‘Group B’ municipality. As Entity 47’s assessment base per capita would be lesser than the group average, it would be entitled to an annual equalization grant of $2,288,346 to ensure equal opportunity among the 53 municipal entities. With the tax room transfer from the provincial government to municipal governments included in the proposed new framework, Entity 47’s assessment base of $1,776,253,100 would be able to yield more revenue than it could under the current local governance regime. Equal Opportunity among municipalities remains a priority in the new framework, but the primary guarantor of said equality is now tax warrants rather than equalization payments.

Of course, the tax room transferred from the provincial government does not necessitate that property tax rates will increase by $1.50 per $100 of valuation across Entity 47, nor does it indicate that the entire municipality will operate with one uniform property tax rate. Because Entity 47 would be composed of suburban and rural populations and since the level of local services may vary considerably within the same municipality, existing provisions regarding differentiated tax rates within the same municipality would need to be used. Residents within each municipality should be taxed for the level of services they receive.[[2]](#footnote-3)

As has been seen in many municipalities around the province, municipalities can adopt differing tax rates for different areas under their jurisdiction. For example, while Eel River Crossing’s property tax rate in 2011 was $1.32 per $100, each former LSD had different, lower property tax rates appropriate to their circumstances. Similar situations can be found across the province, with some cities even imposing different tax rates for those inside and outside the urban center. Entity 47 could easily implement a two tiered property tax regime similar to Fredericton and Dieppe where those inside the urban area and those outside are charged substantially different rates.

Overall, then, Entity 47 would have a financial base appropriate to its size and population. With such a financial base, the municipal entity could be as ambitious or cautious in its service provision as its residents please.

**Division of Municipal and Provincial Responsibilities**

In addition to policing, emergency measures planning, fire prevention and suppression, roads, and garbage disposal, a municipality may choose to enlarge its role and provide a great number of other services. Many municipalities also take responsibility for local arts and culture, parks and recreation, public transportation, and more. Whether or not this sort of expansion is done is entirely up to the residents of Entity 47, and the tax rates of the entity would reflect this level of service. Many of these services, however, would be better served being provided at the regional rather than local level. Rather than leaving some services in the care of the province, the new framework provides Regional Service Districts within which municipalities can collaborate on such basic services as policing, waste management, economic development, and land-use planning. Collaboration on these issues will further reduce cost for services, allowing property tax rates to remain at a reasonable rate.

Entity 47 would belong to RSD 11 along with Entities 48, 49, and 50. As with each municipal entity, RSDs could conceivably be named, but this would be left to each to determine for itself. All entities would be partners in the provision of regional services, with each contributing in accordance with their respective demographic and tax bases.

While this region is too large to be incorporated into a single municipality, the populations nonetheless have a great deal of shared experiences and challenges. RSD 11 covers portions of York, Queens, and Sunbury counties and the distribution of commuters reflects the economic interdependence within these areas. Entity 50, which is entirely contained within York county, has 77% of its commuters leave their own communities but remain within the county. Likewise, the portions of the other three proposed entities not included in York county travel outside their counties of origins for work. The only exception in this regard is Entity 47 which does support a significant group of commuters who remain within their own communities in Sunbury county. Overall, however, the economies of the four entities of RSD 11 are dependent on the economic hub of Fredericton proper. In addition to lower costs associated with shared regional services, this regional cooperation will therefore also allow for further collaborative economic planning to reflect the interconnected economies of these communities.

By better enabling municipalities to provide the services their citizens require through cooperation in service provision, the new framework would therefor clarify the distinction between municipal and provincial responsibilities. While today the service provision of roads, animal control, and policing is dependent on whether or not you live in an incorporated or unincorporated local governance entity, in the new framework, all of these services will be provided by the municipal government. When the residents know exactly who is accountable for what, services will improve.

**Summation**

Overall, Entity 47 would allow all residents to enjoy a comparable level of service in correlation with their level of taxation, to feel represented at a local level and have a real say in how their property tax dollars are being spent, and create a municipal entity that is sustainable enough to navigate the demographic and economic challenges of the 21st century.

1. Finn, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Finn, 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)