PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

REVIEW OF ELECTORAL WARDS AND REPRESENTATION METHODS

Your participation is important. Have your say!

February 2025



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Local governance reform in 2023, which saw the amalgamation of the City of Edmundston, the Village of Rivière-Verte, part of the Saint-Jacques and Saint-Joseph LSDs.
- The municipal council has asked to review the **boundaries of the electoral wards** and the **representation methods**, and to suggest a representation method based on comments received during consultations with the population.
- OBJECTIVE: to recommend a citizen representation model that reflects this new municipal entity.

• GOALS:

- o to ensure effective and fair representation
- to give the communities that make up this new city a voice in the decision-making process.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

In order to proceed with this complex process, City Council approved, in December 2024, the creation of an independent advisory committee of citizens, whose mandate includes examining and recommending models for representing the population.

- -Dominique Babineau
- -Jacques Desjardins
- -Madeleine Dubé
- -Noëlline LeBel
- -Bernard LeBel
- -Chair: George Pérusse

WORK OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

- Consultation with experts
 - Political scientist
 - Geographer
 - Geomatician
 - Urban planner
 - Municipal administrators
 - Municipal councils
- Research among municipalities in New Brunswick and elsewhere in Canada
- Public consultation and survey
- Analysis
- Drafting of a final report with recommendations to the municipal council.

PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The review committee was mandated to:

- Consult and listen to the public.
- Take into account the various geographical, social and demographic issues.
- **Examine** the various representation models (hybrid, traditional, general).
- Evaluate and recommend effective and fair representation for implementation in the next election in 2026.

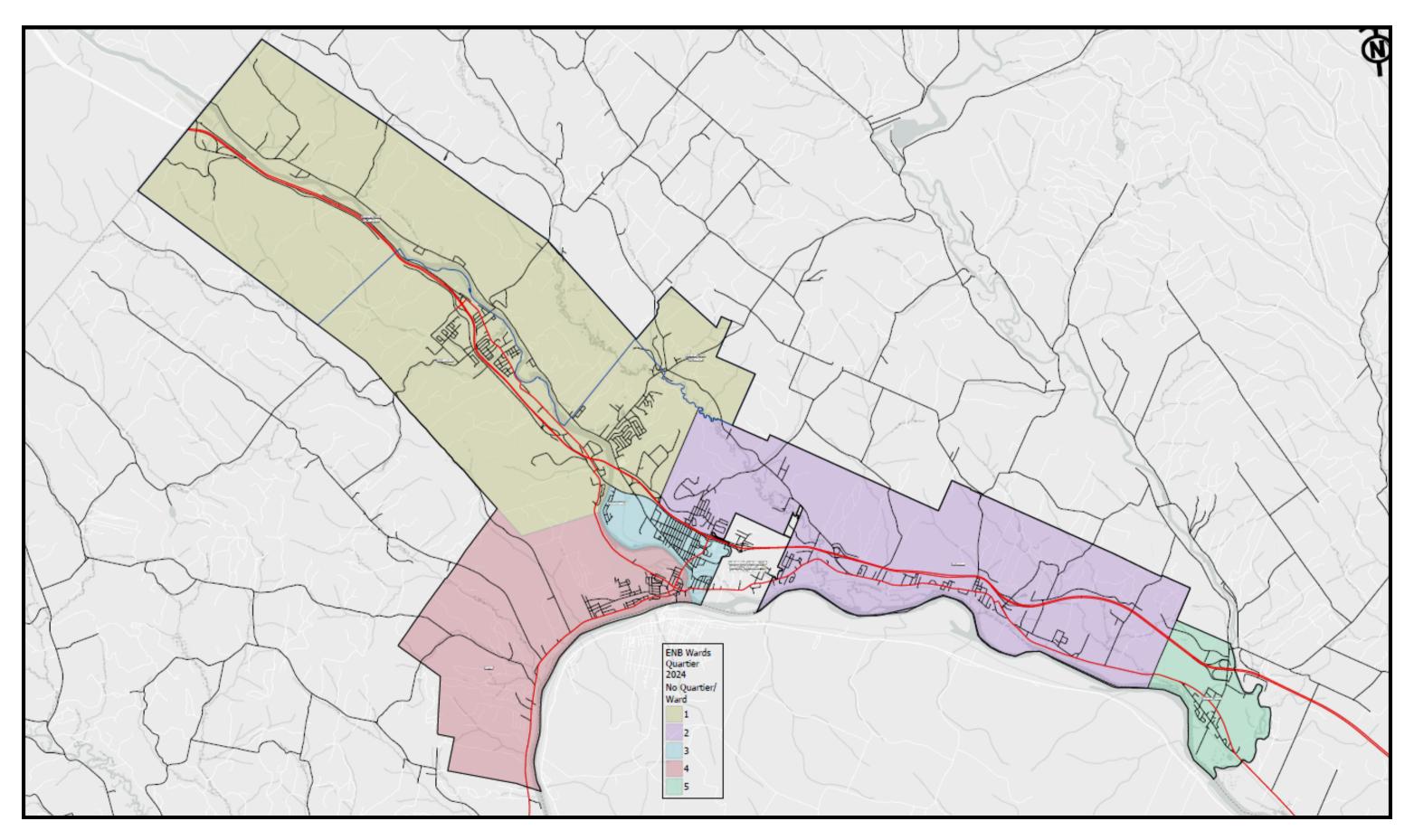
REMINDER

The changes will not affect the addresses or names of the communities.

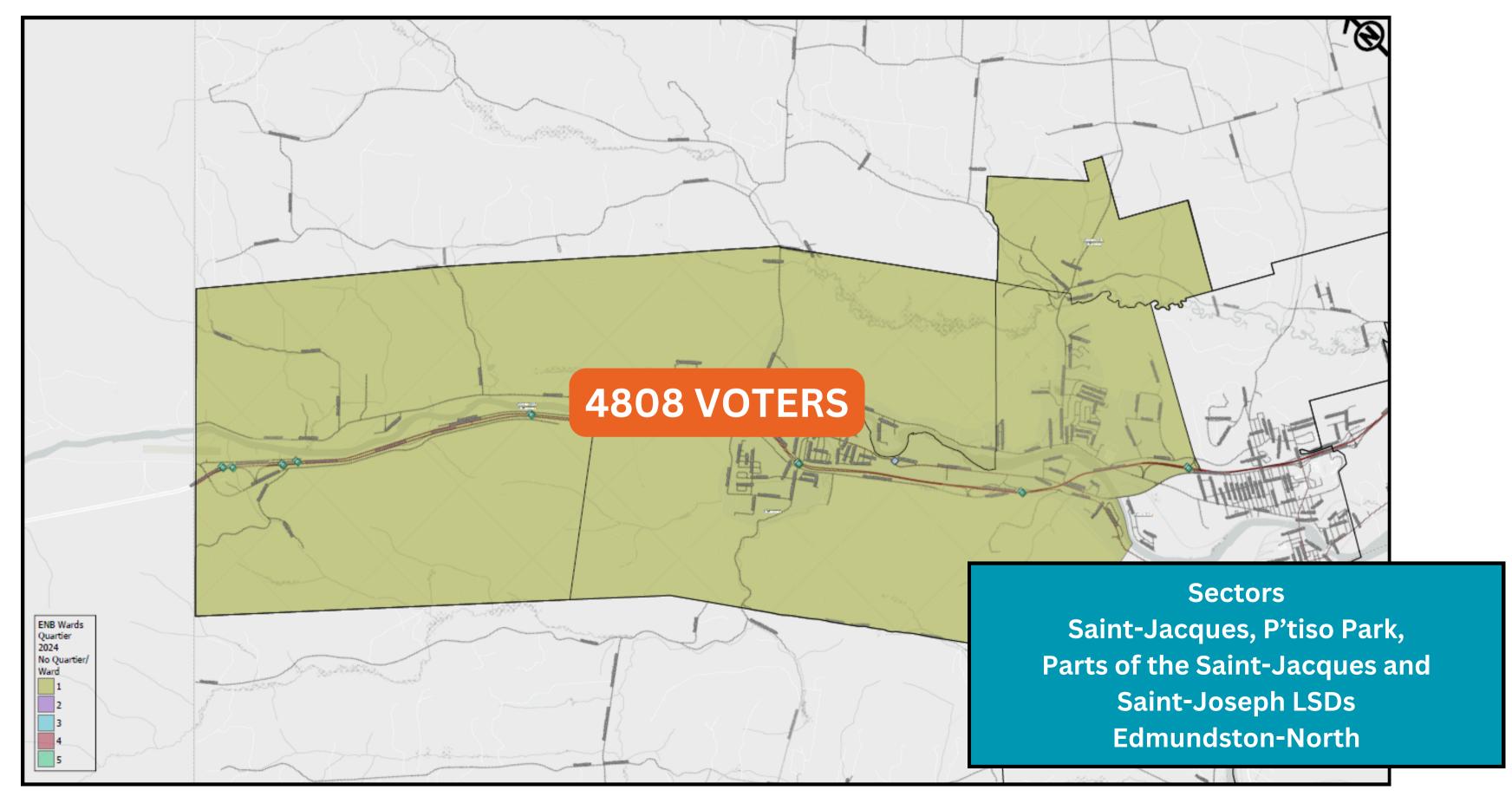
It is purely an electoral and representational issue.

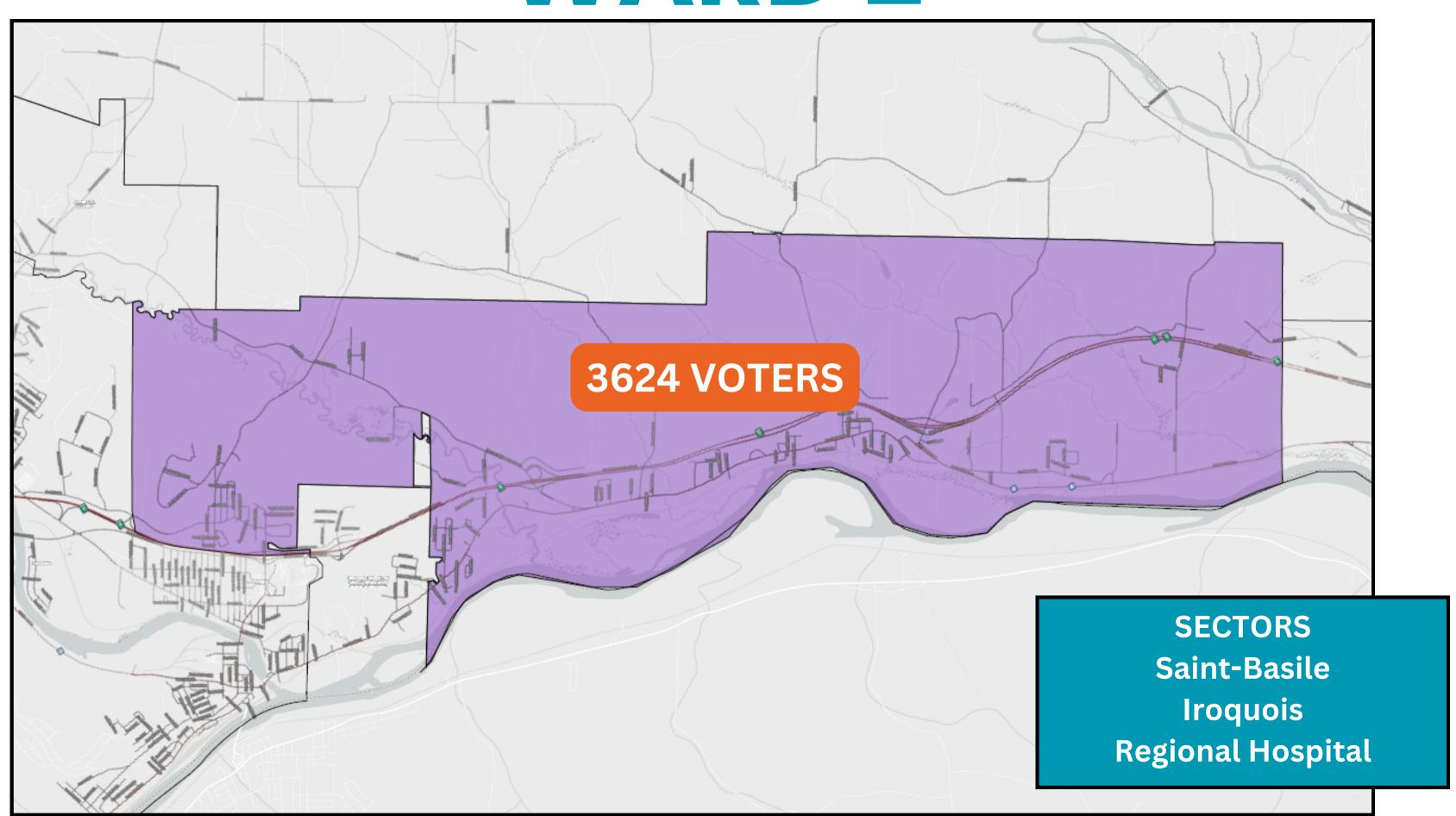
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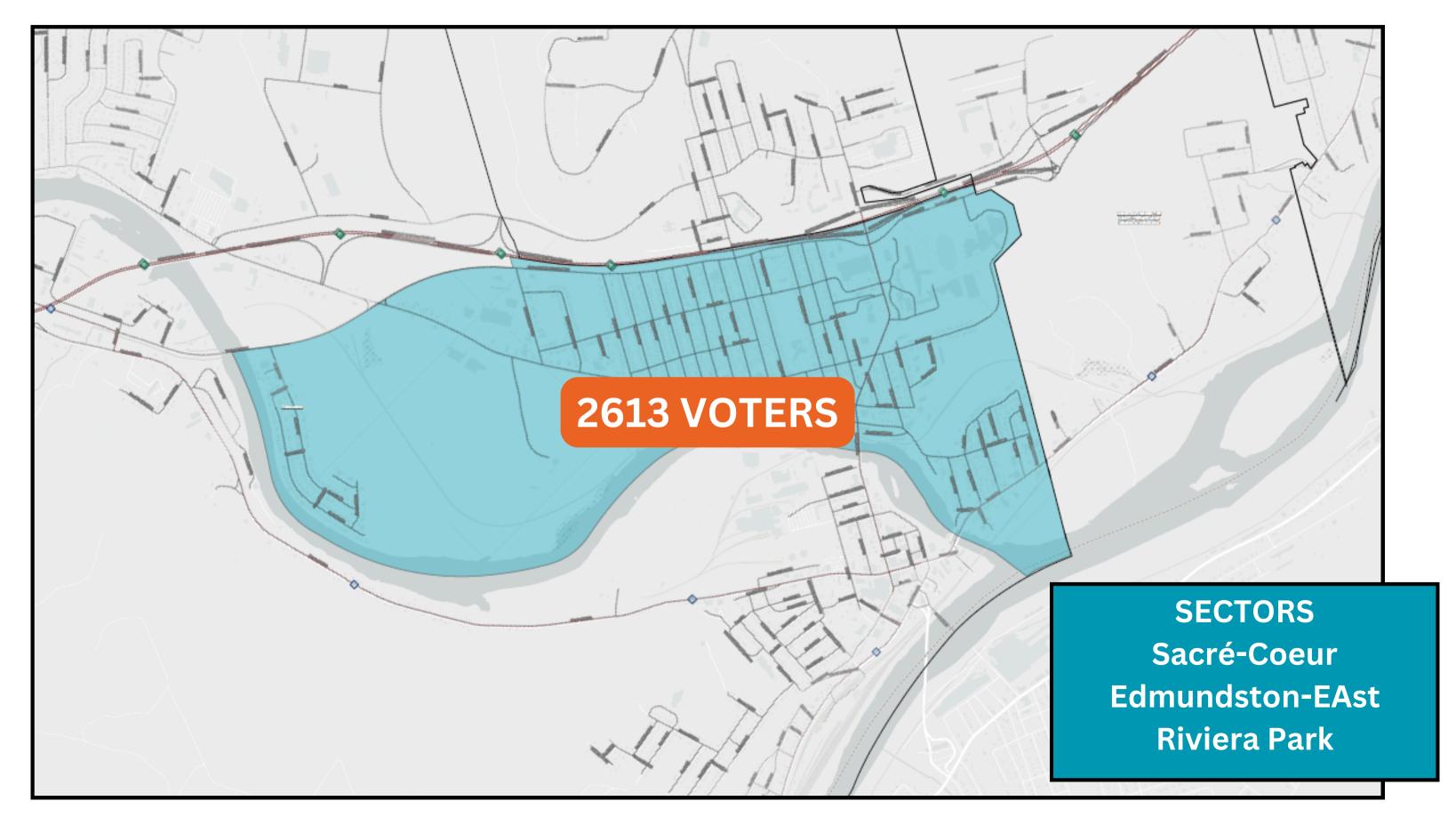
CURRENT SITUATION

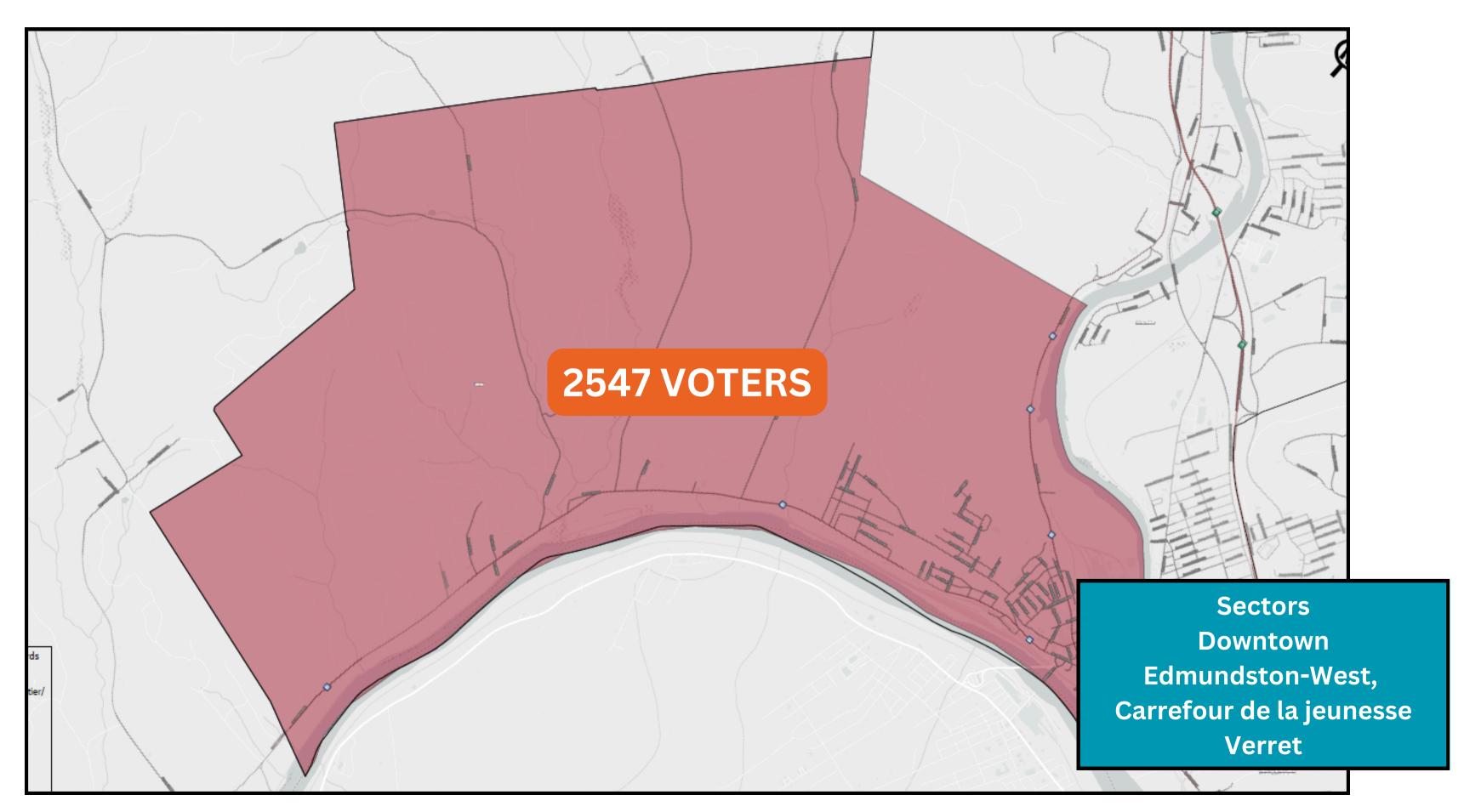


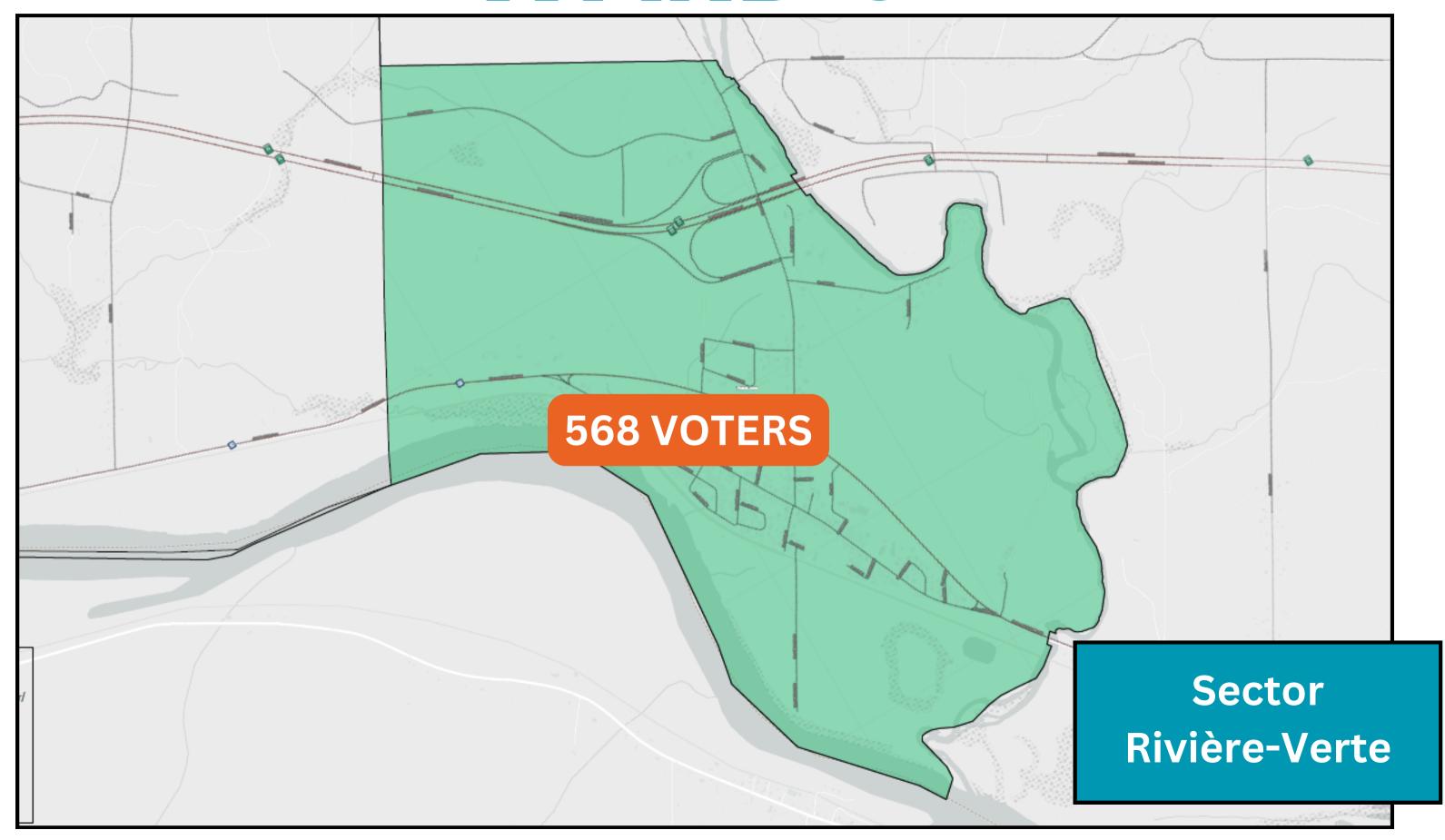
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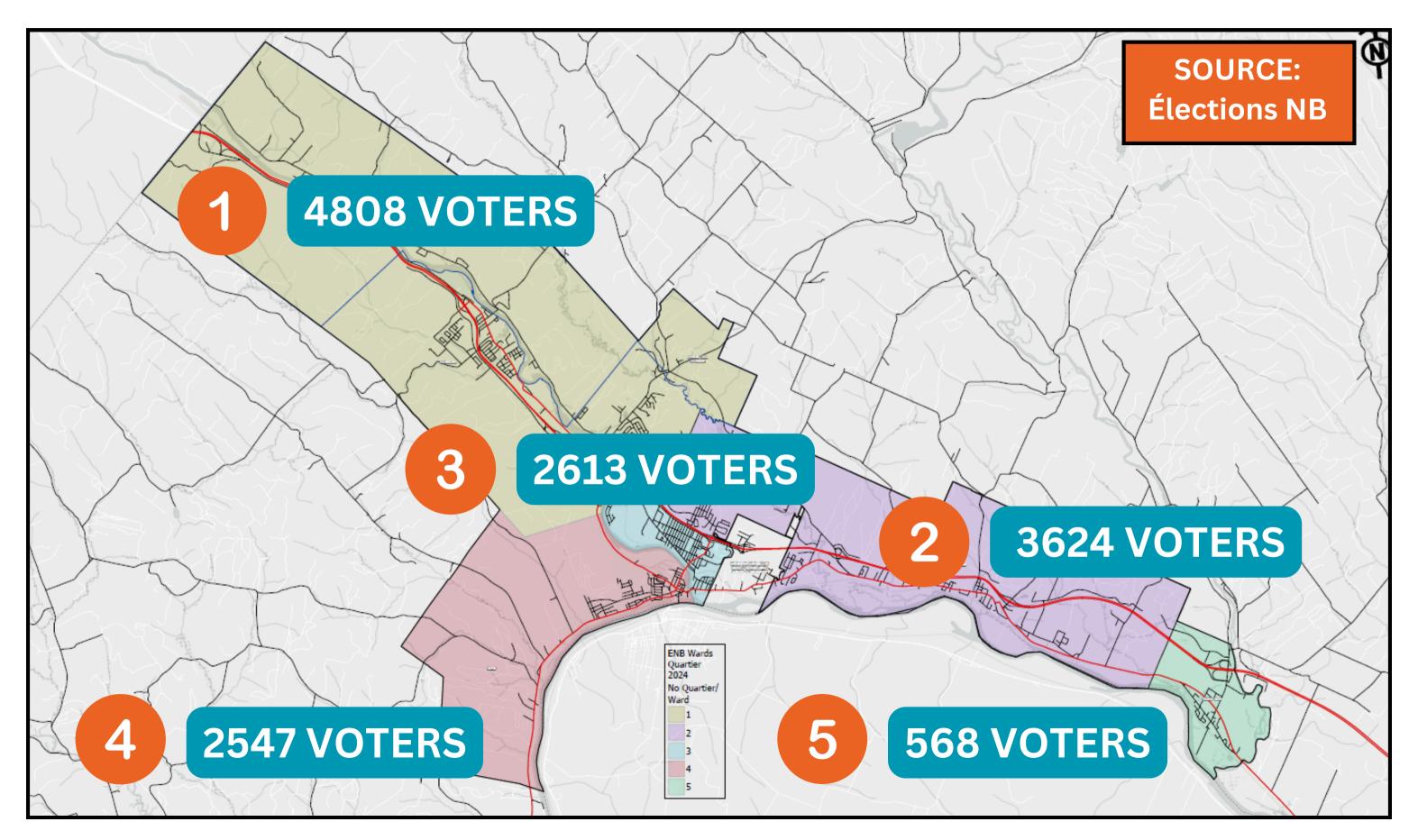








CURRENT SITUATION



ROLE OF CITY COUNCIL

A local government is elected to ensure the delivery of quality services throughout the area while making decisions on local issues.

The services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Recreation
- Land use
- Street construction and maintenance (snow clearance, pothole patching)
- Fire protection
- Police and
- Animal control.

Each local government has a council made up of a mayor and councillors who are elected in a general municipal election to represent their constituents at a local level.

Local Governance Act, LN-B 2017

ROLE OF THE MAYOR

- Presides at all meetings of the council, unless otherwise provided by procedural by-law
- Provides leadership in dealing with the council
- Communicates information to the council concerning measures to be taken to improve the finances, administration and local governance and makes recommendations to the council in this regard
- Speaks out on local government concerns on behalf of the council
- Fulfills any other duty imposed on him or her by the Local Government Act, or any other Act or the council.

Local Governance Act, LN-B 2017

ROLE OF THE COUNCILLOR

- Considers the welfare and interests of the whole local government in making decisions
- Brings to the attention of the council matters likely to promote the welfare or interests of the local government
- Participates in the development and evaluation of local government policies and programs
- Attends meetings of the council, committees of the council and any other body to which the council has appointed him or her
- Fulfills any duties imposed on him or her by the Local Government Act, any other Act or the council.

 Local Government Act, any other Act
 Local Government Act, LN-B 2017

POSSIBLE MODELS

Traditional representation model

The municipality is divided into wards, with the number of elected members determined by municipal by-law.

Hybrid representation model

Some councillors are elected by ward, while others are elected by general ballot (not linked to a ward but have the same role as those elected by ward).

General representation model

Wards no longer exist and council members are elected for the municipality as a whole.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Minimum requirements under the NB Local Governance Act

Traditional (by wards)

- 1 mayor
- 1 councillor by ward

General

- 1 mayor
- 3 councillors elected at large

Hybrid

- 1 mayor
- 1 councillor per ward
- 1 councillor elected at large



PROS OF THE TRADITION MODEL (BY WARDS)

- Councillors are more likely to be genuine local representatives who are easily accessible and aware of local issues.
- Distinct communities of interest are more likely to be represented.
- A particular viewpoint or sectoral interest is less likely to dominate the Council.
- Simplifies the electoral process for voters.
- Easier for a new candidate to win the election.
- Less costly elections for candidates (campaign limited to the ward).

CONS OF THE TRADITIONAL MODEL (BY WARDS)

- Councillors may be elected on minor issues and not have a vision of the municipality as a whole.
- Ward boundaries can divide communities of interest.
- Possibility of a limited choice of candidates.
- Greater likelihood of being elected unopposed.
- Ward boundaries subject to change due to demographic shifts.
- Unequal workloads for councillors with larger wards.
- May discourage new candidates if an incumbent is generally popular.

PROS OF THE GENERAL MODEL

- Greater choice of candidates for voters (opportunity to consider all candidates for election to Council).
- Voters can choose the candidates they think will do the best job (not limited to local candidates).
- Elected representatives have a broader view of the municipality as a whole.
- The probability of an unopposed election is reduced.

CONS OF THE GENERAL MODEL

- Candidates must campaign throughout the municipality (more costly and restrictive).
- No designated voices for particular communities or localities within the municipality.
- General model can lead to communities of interest and views being unrepresented (or under-represented).
- Can lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of efforts on the part of councillors (all members of a council represent all the inhabitants of the municipality).

PROS OF THE HYBRID MODEL

Citizens tend to feel more listened to (local councillor + general councillor)

- Better balance in decision-making
- Helps put politics aside when making decisions
- Modern approach

CONS OF THE HYBRID MODEL

- Model under studied in Canada
- In Ontario, for example, only 5% of the 444 municipalities have adopted this model.
- Anecdotal comments from some municipal councils
- The mayor often has to rule on a tie vote (less frequent with the other two models).
- Perception of inequality between councillors elected by ward and those elected at large.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE

MUNICIPALITY	VOTERS	GOUVERNANCE	# ELECTED OFFICIALS
			Mayor +
Bathurst	11 615	Traditional (2 wards – 7/2)	9 councillors
Campbellton	9 067	Traditional (5/2/2/1)	10 councillors
Edmundston	14 160	Traditional (5 wards – 2)	10 councillors
Fredericton	48 723	Traditional (12 wards – 1)	12 councillors
Dieppe	20 376	Hybrid (5 wards + 3 at large)	8 councillors
Moncton	51 714	Hybrid (4 wards + 2 at large)	10 councillors
Saint John	49 333	Hybrid (4 wards + 2 at large)	10 councillors
Miramichi	13 994	General (no wards – 8 at large)	8 councillors

WHY YOUR COMMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

An essential step to ensure the transparency of the process



- Gathering your ideas, impressions, concerns and, above all, your suggestions for improving public representation on the municipal council
- Recommend effective and fair representation to be implemented at the next elections in 2026.

WHAT WE'RE ASKING

Reflect on the current system



- Consider the number of elected representatives
- Reflect on the current division of wards
- Consider the different models
- Express an opinion based on the information received

WHAT'S NEXT

• Survey on the municipal website (Feb. 25 to March 7)

Comments via email to <u>revision.zones@gmail.com</u>

Deliberations of the review committee

Presentations to City Council

Publication of a final report in spring

