Municipality of the District of Yarmouth

Municipal Boundary Review

Report #2 – What We Heard Report

UPLAND

October 2026



UPLAND

Municipal Boundary Review

What We Heard Report

This report was prepared by UPLAND Planning + Design for the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth



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INTRODUCTION



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Municipalities in Nova Scotia typically review their council size, number of municipal polling districts, and their respective boundaries on an eight-year cycle, as required by the *Municipal Government Act*. This requirement is to ensure effective representation. That is, that every elector's vote has similar power.

As a municipality's population changes over time, the composition of its polling districts change as well. To ensure that residents' interests are being represented in an equitable manner, efforts are made through this process so that each polling district has a similar number of residents with common interests and identities. The geographic area of each district is also taken into account.

The Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board (NSRAB) is responsible for overseeing the Municipal Boundary Review process. This independent provincial body is responsible for reviewing and making decisions on applications of municipal boundaries.

Municipalities may also apply to make changes to their council size and/or electoral boundaries outside of the regular eight-year review schedule.

In its 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, Council for the Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (MODY) resolved to explore a change to its governance structure. This included a potential change from the current warden system with seven councillors, to a mayoral system consisting of a mayor elected at large and six electoral districts, each electing one councillor. Sampling conducted by Narrative Research in March 2026 found that more than two-thirds of decided respondents supported a mayoral system over a warden system.

Pursuant to the authority and requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*, Council decided in March of 2026 to proceed with a transition to a mayoral system with six electoral districts. This completed "Phase 1" of a typical Boundary Review process. Following this decision, MODY is undertaking "Phase 2", a comprehensive review to develop the proposed boundaries for these districts.

Part of the review process includes engaging with community members to gather their input on how they think the new electoral district boundaries should be drawn.

HOW WILL THIS REPORT BE USED?

This report captures what we heard during the engagement process for Phase 2 of the boundary review, ensuring transparency and accountability by sharing how community input has been gathered and considered.

Feedback gathered during the engagement phase will help inform the selection and refinement of a preferred boundary scenario to present to Council. Once a preferred electoral boundary scenario is approved by Council it will be forwarded to NSRAB, along with these engagement results, for review and potential adoption.

WHAT WE DID



WHAT WE DID

Engagement activities were open to the public from September 8 to October 4, 2026. Community members were invited to share their input through an online survey, interactive mapping activity, or by attending one of the in-person or online information sessions.



PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website was set up as the hub for information and online engagement activities. The site includes information about why the project is happening and what an electoral boundary review is. The online survey and interactive map were also hosted on the project website for easy access.

You can visit the project site at speakupland.ca/district-yarmouth-electoral-boundary-review.



ADVERTISING ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Municipality promoted the in-person and online events by:

- using their website and social media channels;
- placing a notice in the Window Shopper advertising and classifieds paper; and
- advertising on the local Y95 CJLS radio station.



COMMUNITY SESSIONS

The project team hosted five community sessions; four in-person across the municipality and one online. Each session included a brief presentation to introduce the project and share each of the proposed electoral boundary scenarios for feedback.



ONLINE SURVEY AND INTERACTIVE MAP

Community members were invited to share comments on an interactive map or by completing a survey to gather feedback on the proposed electoral boundary scenarios.

The online survey was completed by 19 respondents, and 1 comment was left on the interactive map.

Early in the engagement process, survey respondents noted that the maps were difficult to read. Within the first week of the survey being up, project maps were updated to more clearly show the boundary lines and include street names.

WHAT WE HEARD



WHAT WE HEARD

Feedback received during the community engagement phase was limited. This may have been due to the Municipality already completing engagement specific to the potential for a mayor system and for the number of Councillors. In our experience, these topics are often the most controversial of a boundary review process and draw the most interest.

Consequently, while the following is a summary of what we heard, we also acknowledge that these results are not necessarily reflective of the opinions on electoral boundaries held by the wider MODY community.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

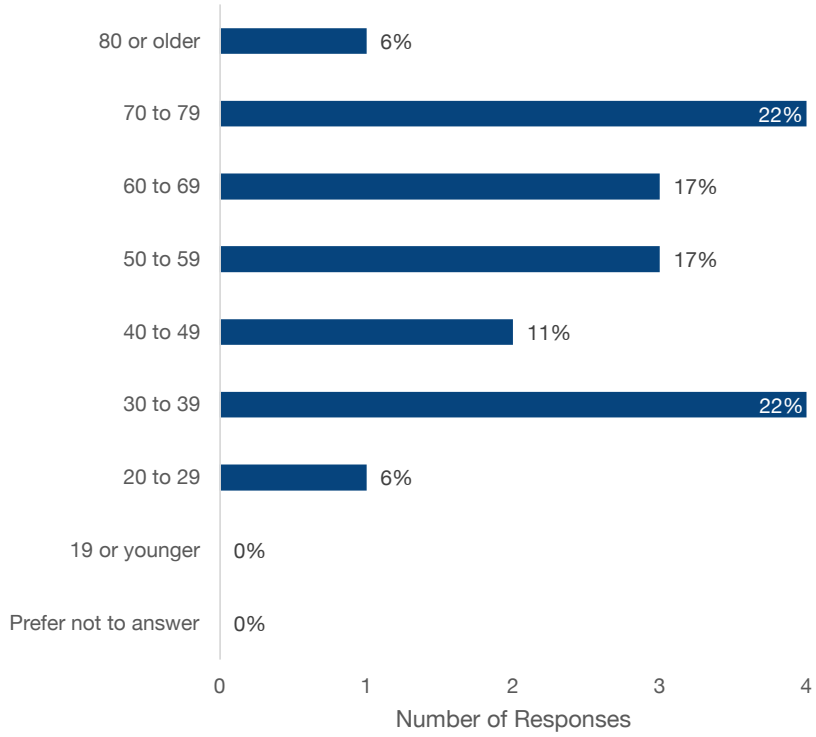
The online survey was completed by 19 residents. None of the questions were mandatory, and not all respondents answered all questions. The total numbers of responses are noted in the graph titles.

Of the residents we heard from, most were between the ages of 50 to 69 (34%). No respondents were under the age of 20.

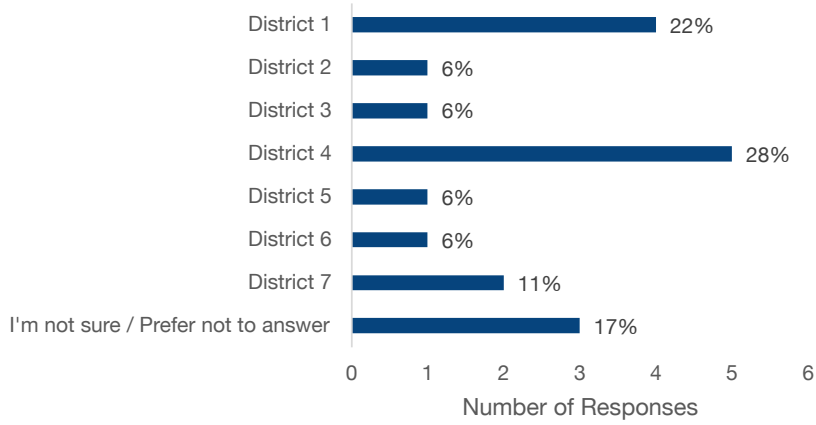
Most respondents live in current electoral District 4 (28%) or District 1 (22%). 17% of respondents were not sure or preferred not to identify which district they live in.

All survey respondents were residents of MODY, with most living in MODY for more than 10 years (78%).

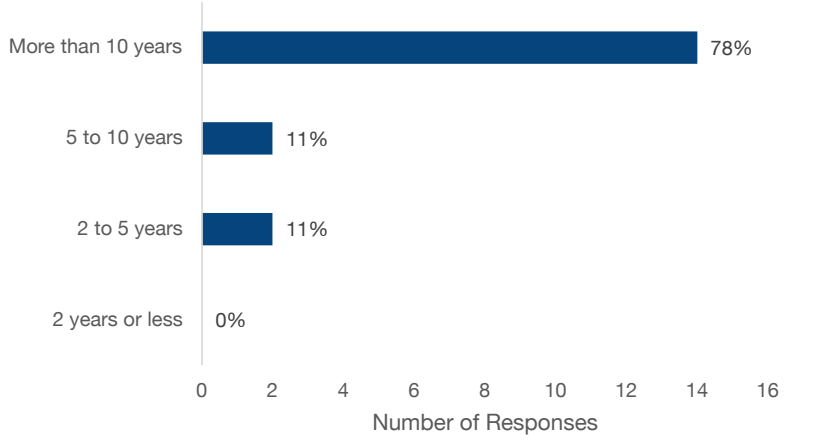
What is your age? (18 responses)



To the best of your knowledge, which electoral district in MODY do you currently reside in? (18 responses)



How long has MODY been your primary residence? (18 responses)



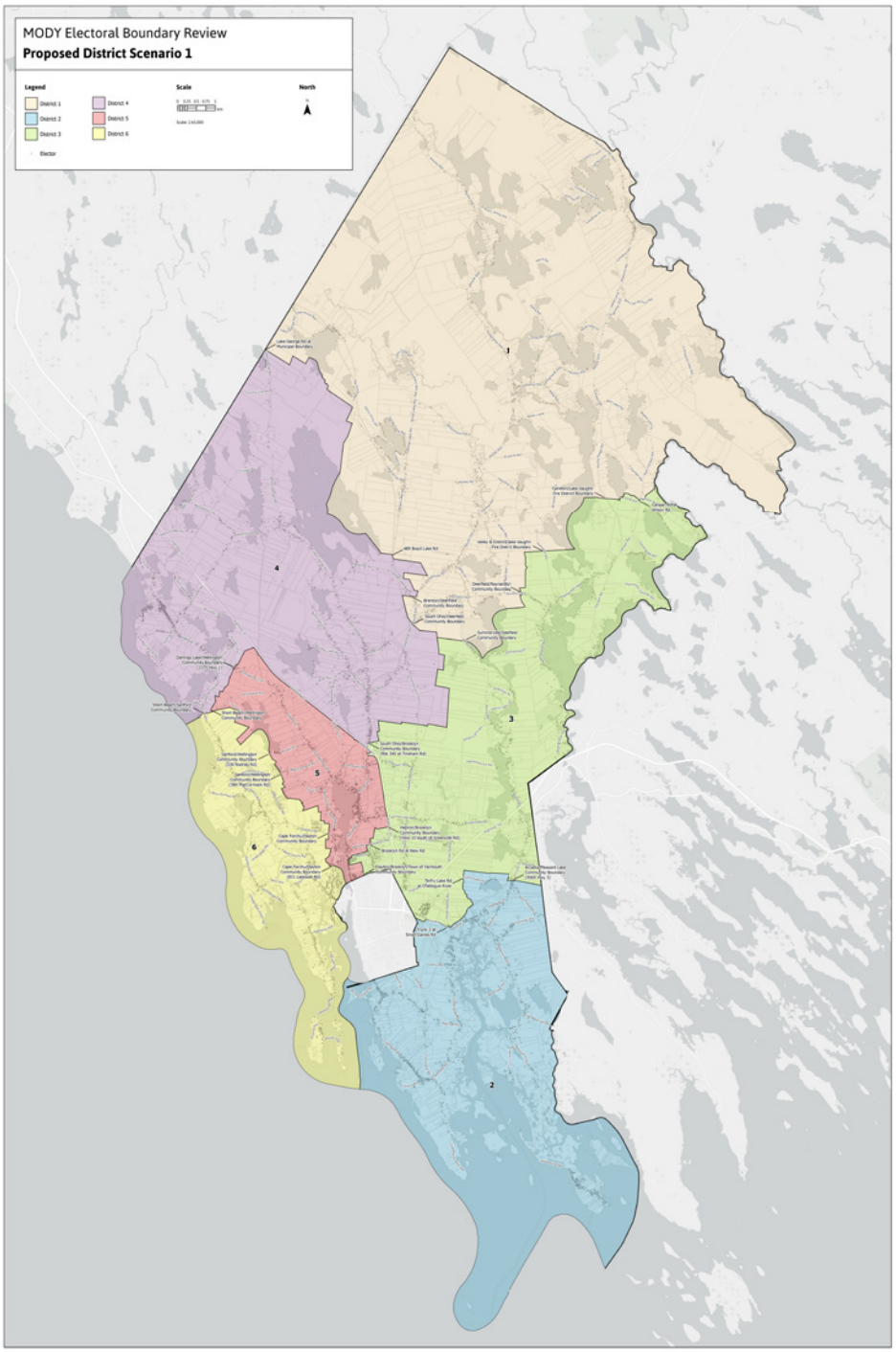
SCENARIO 1

Scenario 1 focuses on the following criteria:

+ Prioritizes following Community Boundaries
+ Prioritizes following Fire District Boundaries
+ Keeps First Nations Lands and future additions considered
+ Keeps Greenville consolidated in a single district
+ Keeps Fishing Communities consolidated in a district
+ Fewer electors in districts where population of ratepayers is high

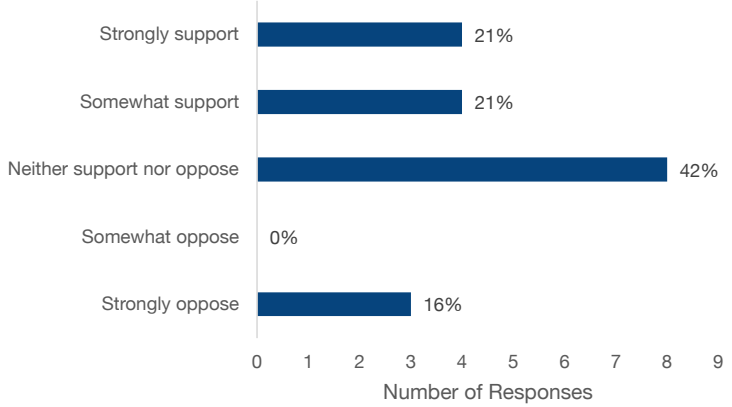
There were 13 map or survey comments on Scenario 1. Some respondents feel that Scenario 1 is logical, like how it follows existing fire boundaries and part of Highway 1, and like that it keeps communities of interest together. Some respondents shared concerns that Districts 1 and 4 are too large.

Residents who attended the community sessions liked how communities of interest are kept together, but shared concerns about how the area north of the Town of Yarmouth is divided among multiple districts.



District	Electors	Variance
1	1406	-7.67
2	1632	7.17
3	1533	0.67
4	1605	5.4
5	1498	1.63
6	1463	-3.93

What is your level of support for Scenario 1? (19 responses)



SCENARIO 2

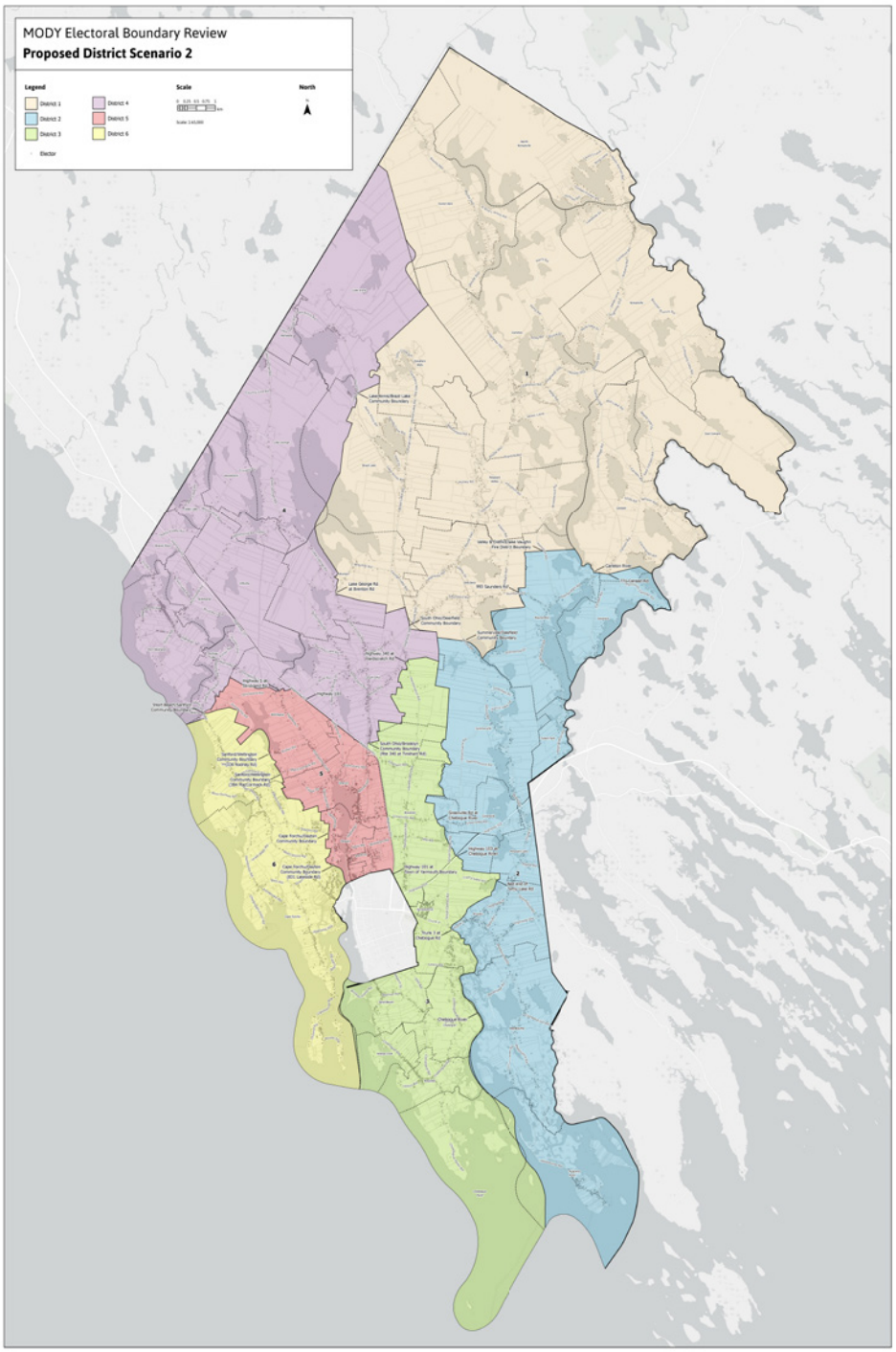
Scenario 2 focuses on the following criteria:

+ Prioritizes following Fire District Boundaries
+ Prioritizes following physical/ logical features
+ Keeps First Nations Lands and future additions considered
+ Keeps Greenville consolidated in a single district
+ Keeps Fishing Communities consolidated in a district
+ Fewer electors in districts that contain Communities of Interest
+ Lower elector numbers where population growth is expected
+ Minimizes change from current electoral districts

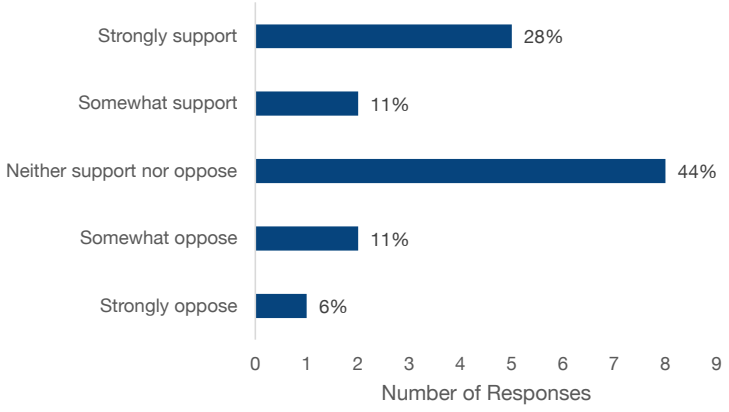
Of the respondents who provided comments about Scenario 2 (12 comments), some like that it is similar to the existing boundaries. Some respondents noted again that District 1 is much larger than the other districts, and others like that this scenario continues to keep communities of interest together.

Community session attendees like that Scenario 2 is most similar to what currently exists, but shared concerns about the length of Districts 1 and 2.

District	Electors	Variance
1	1545	1.46
2	1498	-1.63
3	1383	-9.18
4	1595	4.74
5	1653	8.55
6	1463	-3.93



What is your level of support for Scenario 2? (18 responses)



SCENARIO 3

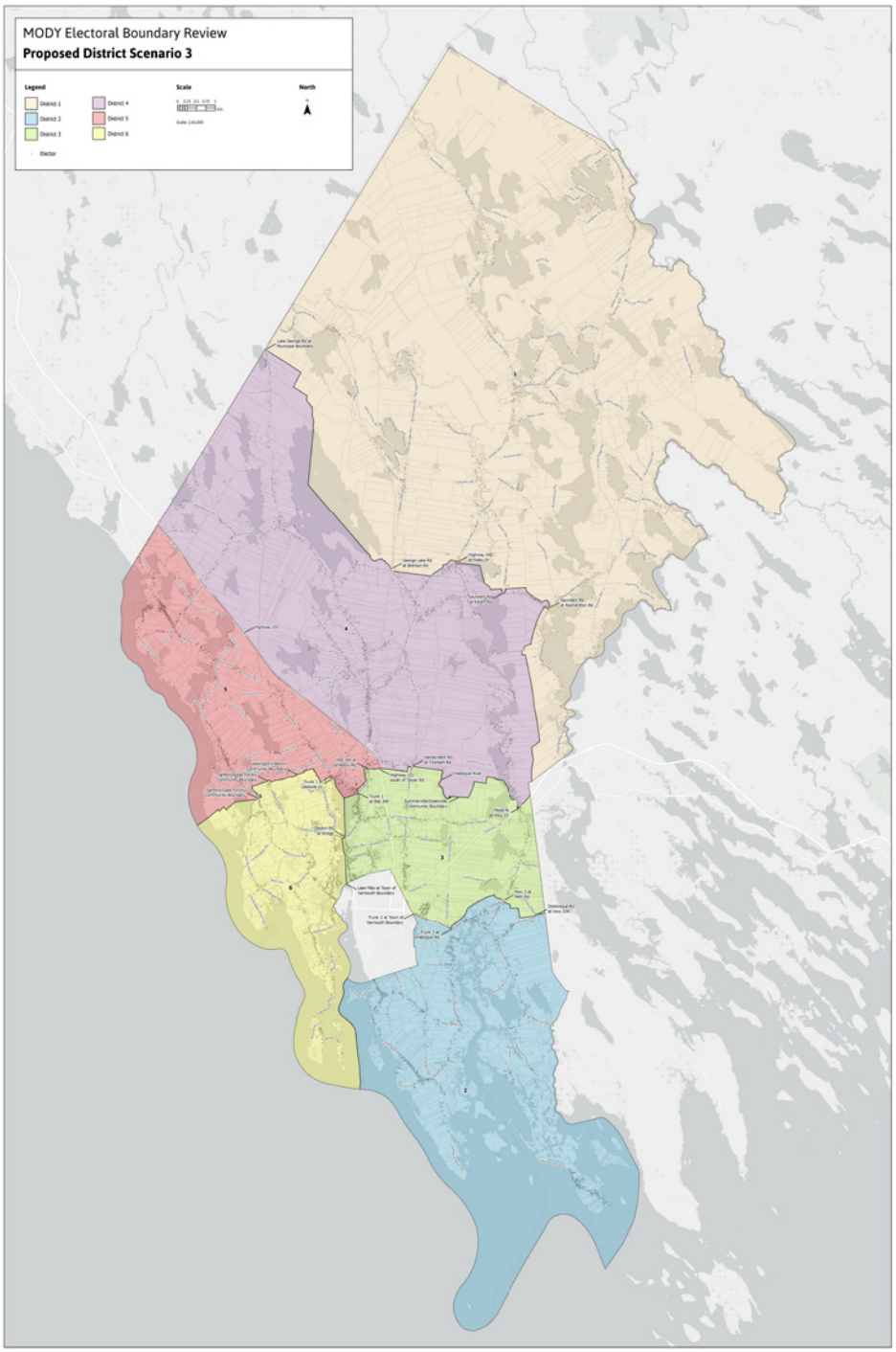
Scenario 3 focuses on the following criteria:

+ Prioritizes following physical/ logical features
+ Keeps First Nations Lands and future additions considered
+ Keeps Greenville consolidated in a single district
+ Keeps Communities of Interest consolidated according to their distribution shown in census data
+ Prioritizes balancing elector numbers/minimizing variance
+ Minimizes travel time within districts

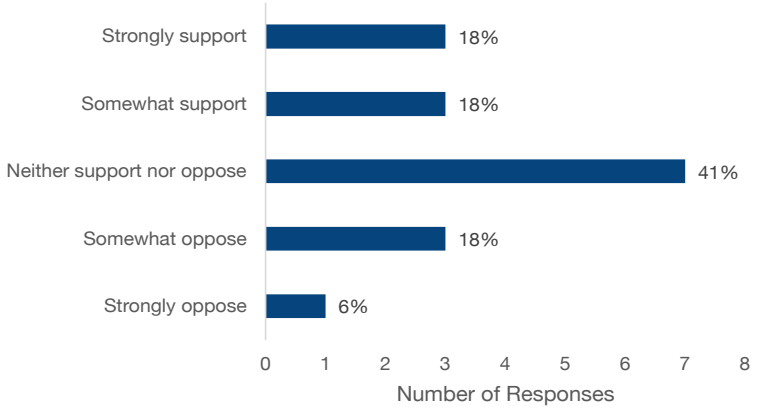
Of the comments for Scenario 3 (8 comments), some noted that it looks like it distributes the geographic areas more evenly among councillors. Some respondents like how Districts 5 and 6 are divided, but others noted that these areas are very similar and should be kept together.

During the community sessions, participants liked that Scenario 3 provided the most opportunity for growth without going over the +/-10% variance, but shared concerns about the size of District 1.

District	Electors	Variance
1	1521	-0.12
2	1543	1.33
3	1551	1.85
4	1542	1.26
5	1409	-7.47
6	1571	3.17



What is your level of support for Scenario 3? (17 responses)



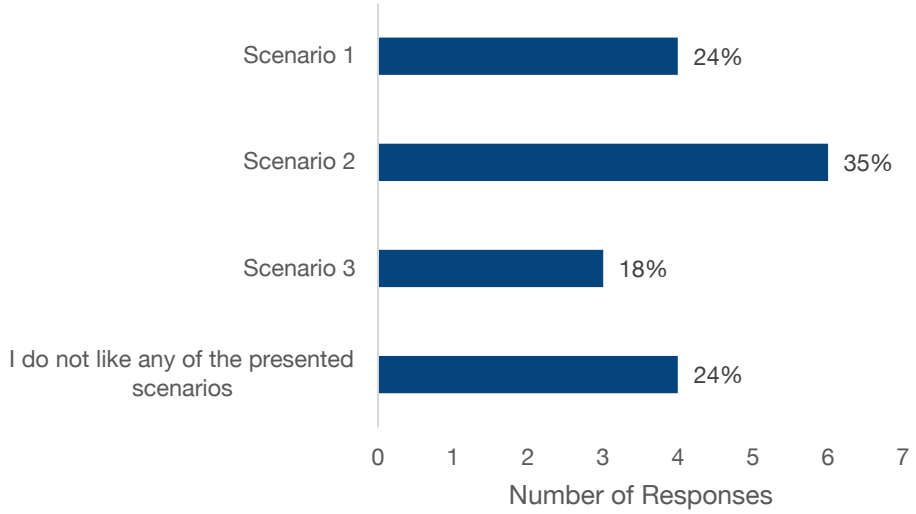
PREFERRED SCENARIO

Online survey respondents preferred Scenario 2 (35%), followed by Scenario 1 (24%).

Comments left for this question (4 comments) were mostly indifferent to the proposed options, saying there is nothing they would change or they do not care which scenario is chosen.

Participants were also able to share additional comments about the project. Minimal feedback was provided (7 comments). Of the comments left, participants appreciate the Municipality engaging with community members on the electoral boundary review, but there was also a general theme of not feeling concerned about which scenario is chosen. Some respondents feel all of the options are adequate, while others shared their preference for the Municipality to amalgamate with the Town of Yarmouth.

Of the three scenarios presented, which do you prefer? (17 responses)





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