

**Vision:** A welcoming place to live, grow and thrive

**Mission:** Facilitating growth, wellness, and prosperity through effective and forward-thinking leadership.

**Council Meeting:** Residents of Westfield West for Posting

Date: 11/24/21

**TITLE: WORKING TOGETHER FOR VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: WHITE PAPER**

**PREPARED BY: JOHN ENNS-WIND**

**DEPARTMENT: GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

For Information

For Discussion

For Decision

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**RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

- Legislative

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Working Together for Vibrant and Sustainable Communities: White Paper
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**BACKGROUND**

Minister Allain released the Working Together for Vibrant and Sustainable Communities: White Paper November 18<sup>th</sup>. It is a comprehensive document outlining the changes and the timeline for implementation. Many of the changes are to be implemented in 2023 with 2022 being a year of transition. The latest change to be implemented will be in 2027 with all entities to have Land Use Plans.

Also, the Mayor and CAO of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield would like to extend an invitation to you to meet with us to discuss the ramifications of the restructuring.

***Local History of Amalgamation***

Restructuring municipalities, also known as amalgamation and annexation, has a long history. Locally, there have been many changes with the most recent in 1998 with the amalgamation of the Town of Grand Bay and the Village of Westfield. Development in the area started with Parishes within the County system. In the 1960s there were three local improvement districts including Westfield, Grand Bay and Pamdenec. In 1966 Westfield and Pamdenec became villages.

In 1973 Grand Bay was incorporated as a village including the former village of Pamdenec and Westfield became a larger village with the amalgamation of the areas of Lingley, Sagwa, and Nerepis. The Town of Grand Bay was incorporated in 1986.

**Summary of LSD Westfield West Residents' Concerns**

Several residents have expressed questions and concerns regarding the proposed changes in the White Paper. The following summary is an attempt to identify as many of the questions and concerns as possible.

- Will residents of the LSD have electoral representation?
- Will taxes go up?
- Where will residents of the LSD pay their taxes?

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- Will Westfield West Residents have to contribute funding towards the Greater Saint John Regional Facilities Commission? What about the River Valley Community Centre?
- Who will provide protective services? Where will our police and fire suppression services come from?
- Will the properties of the LSD lose curbside collection services?
- Will the Westfield and District Recreation Association (W&DRA) lose their annual funding?
- What will happen to recreation assets used by the W&DRA?
- Will the residents of Westfield West lose their representation on Fundy Regional Service Commission?
- Land Use Plan: can properties have animals such as chickens and goats?
- Who is responsible for road maintenance?

### New Boundaries

The boundaries of the Town and the LSD are being adjusted. At this time the specific boundary is not known. However, in general terms, 75% of the LSD of Westfield West and all of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield are to form one new municipal entity. The assumption is that the eastern boundary is located around Public Landing with how far north the ribbon expands is not known. Another assumption is that the logging area controlled by Irving will not be part of the new municipality. Also included is the area surrounding Brittain Road and Campbell Road with the assumption that the northern part of the area is in line with the current northern boundary of the Town on Route #177 extending along the southern boundary of the DND Base Gagetown.

The changes affecting the Town and Westfield West is outlined in the following Table.

**Table #1: Implications of Boundary Adjustments**

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Tax Base</b>
<b>Current</b>	4964	\$435,513,300
<b>New</b>	6436	\$512,589,700
<b>Difference</b>	1472	\$77,076,400
<b>Ratio</b>	30%	18%

### COMMENT

Local government reform is an endeavour that is much needed and valued but the results tend to please fewer people. The reform will take time and patience. The following comments are within the context of how they will, presumably, affect Grand Bay-Westfield and Westfield West. When January 1, 2023 arrives there will be the new municipality.

### Responses to Westfield West Resident Concerns

- Will residents of the LSD have electoral representation?
  - Residents of Westfield West will have one or two elected representatives on the new Council of the new entity.
  - Elections are scheduled for November of 2022.
    - The CAO is recommending that the elections be moved to August/September so the new representative(s) can participate in the budget deliberations for the 2023 Budget.
    - Update: the November election date is firm and will not be changed.
    - Currently each Councillor of the Town represents 993 people. If one councillor is elected from Westfield West, then they will represent 1,472 people which is 148% of the current ratio. Councillors are to represent the interests of the entire community.
  - The CAO will host two Candidate Information sessions for those residents interested in serving on the Council of the new community.
  - The CAO will host an Orientation Session for the new Council ensuring that the new Councillor feels a part of Council, their views are heard, they understand some of the issues facing the new community and that they learn good governance.
- Will taxes go up?
  - They may go up; both the Acting Deputy Minister and Minister have publicly stated that LSDs have been subsidized by the Province's General Operating Budget. In section 4.1.1 of the White Paper, local governments and rural districts will maintain different tax rates.
- Where will residents of the LSD pay their taxes?
  - Residents will continue to pay their taxes to Service NB.
    - The taxes will be distributed to the new municipal entity.
- Will Westfield West residents have to contribute funding towards the Greater Saint John Regional Facilities Commission and the River Valley Community Centre?
  - Yes, Grand Bay-Westfield, Rothesay, and Quispamsis are legislatively bound to contribute to the operations of the Greater Saint John Regional Facilities Commission. This money comes from the General Operating budget.
  - Each year the River Valley Community Centre Foundation makes a budget request. When that facility was constructed, the LSDs provided money to build it but withdrew from supporting the operations of the facility. This money comes from the General Operating budget.

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- Please note that these facilities are important in attracting people to the region and the Town.
- Who will provide protective services? Where will our police and fire suppression services come from?
  - There is no change.
    - The Town currently provides fire suppression services to Westfield West.
    - The detachment on Nerepis Road currently headed by Sgt. Samson will continue to provide services.
- Will the properties of the LSD lose curbside collection services?
  - The Town has been working to try and have curbside waste and recycling collection for 2023.
  - The Town will work with the current contractor in the LSD to ensure curbside collection is continued at a reasonable cost.
- Will the Westfield and District Recreation Association lose their annual funding?
  - No. The Association will have to make a budget request presentation to Council. Legacy associations, such as W&DRA, should be supported. This is no different than what the River Valley Community Centre Foundation does annually.
    - The RVCCF has never been turned down.
    - Monies for the W&DRA would come from the new Council's General Operating Budget.
- What will happen to recreation assets used by the W&DRA?
  - Should the Association continue, and they make their budget request, then those assets and programs can continue.
  - The Town's new Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which residents of Westfield West were invited to participate in the development and provide feedback, provides the Town and users with tools to ensure the right facilities and programs are delivered.
    - Budget 2022 has allocated money for the hiring of a new Recreation position to work with community groups such as W&DRA.
- Will the residents of Westfield West lose their representation on Fundy Regional Service Commission?
  - Yes and no, the type of representation will change. Rather than the Chair of the LSD representing Westfield West, it will be the Mayor of the new entity.
  - Further, representation on the RSC Boards is weighted.

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- Land Use Plan: can properties have animals such as chickens and goats?
  - The purpose of Land Use Plans is to provide direction for the new municipal entity's approach to fostering community and managing land use using public feedback collected throughout the engagement phase of this Plan. The Town's municipal plan vision has been created in tandem with the Town's overall vision; ensuring focused intent on providing a good quality of life for residents and a positive environment for business.
  - Currently, residents of Grand Bay-Westfield can have chickens in their yards, the limit is six.
  - Currently, if your property is more than 3 acres, then you can keep larger animals.
    - Further, if the lot or parcel of land has at least 12,000 square metres (3 acres) plus 455 square metres for each horse and each cow, the keeping of these animals may be approved as per guidelines set out by the Department of Health.
  - Any pre-existing Uses that may not conform to Zoning Regulations will maintain a Non-Conforming Use Designation.
  - Due to the substantive change bringing the two communities together, both the Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw have to be reviewed and, potentially, amended.
    - Residents will have opportunities to participate and advocate for changes to ensure both documents work for the whole community, not just one part.
- Who is responsible for road maintenance?
  - The White Paper clearly states the GNB will retain responsibility for all public road maintenance including residential roads.
    - However, the White Paper is quiet regarding residential streets and other assets such as wastewater systems and recreation assets.
  - The Town, over the past five years, has invested an additional \$100,000 each year in road maintenance on the provincially responsible roads of Nerepis Road and River Valley Drive
  - The Town is concerned that DTI has numerous liabilities and limited resources; how sensitive will they be to local concerns?

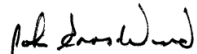
Like the residents of Westfield West, Council and residents of Grand Bay-Westfield have questions and are seeking clarity. For example:

- What is the new boundary?
- What will happen to the reserves accumulated by the Town?
  - Will Westfield West have access to the money?

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- How much will the enhanced Fundy Regional Service Commission cost the new Town entity?
- Which roads is DTI still responsible for?
  - Based on a conversation with the Acting Deputy Minister, DTI is responsible for all public roads in the former LSD
  - What condition are the recreation assets?
  - What condition are the wastewater system assets?
  - How are utilities to be transferred such as the Brittain Road sewage system?
  - How large are the infrastructure assets/liabilities in Westfield West and what will the burden be on the new Town entity?

CAO:   
John Enns-Wind MDiv., MBA

Date: 11/25/21