

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your letter and for compiling and sharing questions submitted by residents. The Committee appreciates the effort to highlight areas of public interest and the importance of maintaining a transparent and informed process.

A number of your comments relate to the need for clarity around the purpose of this work. The Amalgamation Steering Committee has been established to explore whether amalgamation is a viable option for the participating municipal units and the region as a whole. At this stage, the Committee is in an information-gathering and analysis phase, and no decisions have been made.

As this is an exploratory process, any potential recommendation would be informed by evidence, analysis, and public input. If the findings do not demonstrate clear advantages, or if there is insufficient support, amalgamation would not be advanced.

While each municipal unit has its own unique challenges, there are also shared pressures. As identified through joint discussions, our communities are facing rising service delivery costs, pressures of aging infrastructure, staffing and recruitment challenges, increasing regulatory complexity, and revenues that are not keeping pace with expenses.

Amalgamation is being explored to determine whether a single municipal government could deliver services more efficiently, equitably, and sustainably than three separate units. This includes reviewing potential benefits, challenges, and long-term implications related to financial sustainability, service delivery, infrastructure, and governance.

The questions you have compiled reflect several common themes, including governance and representation, taxation, administrative structure, and the overall purpose and process of amalgamation. The Committee acknowledges that these are important areas for residents and require detailed analysis and, where appropriate, independent review before any recommendations can be considered.

At this stage, the Committee is gathering information to assess these areas comprehensively. While detailed answers to each individual question requires further analysis, the Committee can provide the following clarifications:

**Governance and representation** would be determined through a formal independent review process, to ensure fair and effective representation to all residents. This process considers population, geography, and community structure to ensure fair and effective representation. The final, including Council composition and boundaries, would be informed through this review and subject to legislative requirements and established public processes.

**Taxation** impacts are not predetermined and require consideration from a detailed financial review that outlines service requirements, existing infrastructure, and how services are aligned across all areas. In similar processes, this work is typically supported by independent analysis to ensure accurate and transparent modelling. Any potential changes to taxation would be informed through this process and considered alongside broader impacts on residents.

**Administrative structure**, including senior leadership roles, has not been determined and would be informed by a comprehensive review of all three municipal organizations. This work would typically be supported by independent human resources analysis to assess capacity, identify overlaps, and support a structured transition. As is standard with organizational and personnel-related reviews, this analysis would be provided to the Amalgamation Steering Committee in confidence. Any future organizational model would be developed based on this information, with a focus on continuity of operations and effective service delivery.

**Service delivery** and efficiencies are key areas of study, including identifying opportunities to reduce duplication while maintaining or improving services. A review of how services are delivered across all three units and whether a more coordinated approach could improve consistency, access, and long-term sustainability will be shared as the work progresses.

The Committee recognizes the importance of transparency and public engagement. Information has begun to be shared through the Committee's website and FAQ materials, and further improvements to how public questions are collected and communicated will continue to be considered. Questions submitted to the Committee Chair are brought forward for review and help inform ongoing work.

The reference to the Antigonish consolidation experience, and the importance of process, transparency, and public confidence, is noted. The Committee is seeking to learn from the experiences of other municipalities, including Antigonish, West Hants, Region of Queens, and Pictou County, to better understand a range of outcomes and considerations.

The Committee appreciates the constructive nature of your letter and the suggestions provided. Thank you again for your continued engagement. Residents are encouraged to follow the Committee's work through publicly available materials and upcoming meetings.

Sincerely,  
Amalgamation Steering Committee