

The Rural Municipalities of Murray River and Murray Harbour have adopted a resolution to commission the study of the viability of incorporating the entire Southern Kings area into one new municipality.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is the resolution that the Councils passed?

The Councils passed a resolution calling for a study into forming a new municipality in the Southern Kings area.

The resolution indicates that both municipalities wish to engage a consultant to study the costs and benefits of establishing a new sustainable municipality in the Southern Kings Area.

What prompted the Council to take this step at this time? Why now?

We want to see the community thrive and residents get all the services they deserve and expect but this is very difficult at our current size and resources.

Having a strong local government is really important. That is why we are going this route. By coming together with other communities in the area, we can collectively be a strong, viable municipality for the whole area.

Why are you supporting this? Why should residents support such an approach?

Research and examples in PEI, the region and across the country indicate that strong municipal governments can have a positive effect on an area. This includes infrastructure funding, tourism and economic development, attraction of new residents, proper land planning and community programming. By having several smaller communities, we are missing out.

But by coming together, we can see our communities thrive and have local representation to help guide important decisions on crucial issues like land use and create local services for residents.

What communities are you looking to include? Is it just Murray River and Murray Harbour?

The study area will include Murray River and Murray Harbour and the surrounding unincorporated areas defined by fire districts that the Murray River and Murray Harbour fire departments serve. The proposed new municipality would border Three Rivers to the north and Belfast to the west. An assessment identifies this could create a community of approximately 3,000 residents. The purpose of the study is to investigate the viability of a community of this size and nature.

Will residents in the unincorporated areas have a say about their future?

Residents of unincorporated areas are a specific group included in our study approach. We want to engage these residents and hear their thoughts and perspectives on any proposed changes. We will also appoint a committee to oversee the study, with representatives from each of the municipalities and from each of the fire districts.

Why would residents in an unincorporated area want to be a part of any new municipality?

The reality is that most residents of unincorporated areas are already an indirect part of their local municipality. These individuals already use the parks and libraries and attend cultural events. The study will help us to understand the needs and concerns of the residents of the unincorporated area so that we can address them. And area tourism operators and businesses can benefit from improved coordination.

Will residents of the unincorporated areas get to decide if they want to join any new municipality? Will they get to vote on this?

The process for changing boundaries or forming new municipalities is clearly laid out in the Criteria, Principles and Standards regulations of the Municipal Government Act, with final decisions resting with the Executive Council.

Our intent is to really engage everyone who may be affected during the study to try and find out what their needs and concerns are and to determine if there is a way forward that area residents can support.

How long will this process take? How soon could we see a new municipality if that is what happens?

We anticipate the report will be complete in late 2024 or early 2025.