

September 9, 2022

The Honourable Justice Bruce McDonald  
Chair, Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of Alberta  
P.O. Box 45062  
Calgary, AB, T2G 4X3

**Re: Strathcona County Submission on the Proposed Electoral Boundaries for Alberta**

Honourable Justice Bruce McDonald,

Please accept this letter as the official submission to the Commission on behalf of Strathcona County.

Strathcona County recognizes the high-quality work that has gone into the proposed revised boundaries for Alberta. The work that has been completed to bring the population within each electoral boundary as close as possible to the electoral quota is extremely impressive. That being said, Strathcona County urges the Commission to consider the following in its decision-making process, before the report is adopted as final.

Access to elected officials should be considered:

The goal of the Commission to be as close to Alberta's electoral quota was extremely successful. The work to protect the value of each vote in the province is well done. In addition to using the quota as the goal, Strathcona County encourages the Commission to review the ability to access one's elected official. While it would be impossible to completely overcome an issue like this in a country as big as ours, any opportunity to reduce impediments to access should be exercised, when reasonable to do so.

Proposed boundaries split Strathcona County from the City of Fort Saskatchewan:

Currently, Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan make up the Sherwood Park – Fort Saskatchewan riding with both municipalities being fully included in the riding. Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan share a significant number of ties that have been established over several decades of working together. This includes our work together on the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, as well as the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association. Given our two municipalities have so much in common, we believe it makes sense to keep the two municipalities together in one riding as is currently established. While the municipality may not align as closely with the provincial quota, it would still be well within the permitted range of population.

In addition, the proposed new boundaries split the urban service area developed by Strathcona County. As part of Strathcona County's Municipal Development Plan 20-2017, urban and rural service areas were defined. As written, the proposal would split this area in half. Strathcona County has established a growth node, Bremner, in the urban service area that is expected to have a significant amount of population growth. This split in the urban service area may make it difficult to service the municipalities' population. The separation of Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan, as well as splitting the Urban Service Area within Strathcona County would appear to be counter to the principles that are designed to guide this process.

Strathcona County would like to propose that the Commission consider revising the proposed boundaries to maintain the historic and clear connections between Fort Saskatchewan and Strathcona County. A method for this would be for the southern border of the electoral district to start at Township Rd 520 and to extend out as far East as the commission deemed appropriate. The eastern border would then extend to the North until reaching the North Saskatchewan River. Given the population amounts of Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan, as well as the rural population in the area, it is likely that the population for the riding would be very close to the provincial quota and certainly within the 25% margin provided for in the legislation.

In the event that the above change request cannot be accommodated, Strathcona County would urge the Commission to unify the Urban Service Area within Strathcona County, as laid out in Municipal Development Plan 20-2017, within a single electoral district. The change in population would easily remain within the 25% range provided for in the legislation and would not require a series of cascading changes through the rest of the Commission's work.

In addition to this letter, a representative from Strathcona County will be present at the Commission's meeting in Vegreville to present our position. We appreciate the opportunity to do so. I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with you and the rest of the Commission on this. If your staff require further information, please have them contact Darrell Reid, Chief Commissioner, at 780-464-8100.

Sincerely,

Dave Anderson  
Deputy Mayor  
Strathcona County

cc: Strathcona County Council  
Darrell Reid, Chief Commissioner

