



Urban Policy Centre Launches Report on New Brunswick Municipal Reform | May 27 2021

Centre for Urban Policy and Local Governance Director Zack Taylor has prepared a report with M.A. student Jon Taylor in response to the Government of New Brunswick's nationally significant initiative to reform the province's local government system. The report is entitled Representative Regionalization: Toward More Equitable, Democratic, Responsive, and Efficient Local Government in New Brunswick.

Today, 30% of New Brunswickers do not have elected local representation. There is widespread concern about inequitable tax burdens and sprawl around the larger cities, and some local authorities are having trouble providing core services. The report recommends strengthening New Brunswick's 12 Regional Service Commissions along the lines of British Columbia's regional districts, which have successfully coordinated service delivery and land-use planning in that province since the 1960s. The report describes the history and key features of the regional district model and shows how modest reforms to the Regional Service Commissions could make local governance in New Brunswick more flexible, democratic, responsive, and accountable. Past reforms which tried to amalgamate municipalities failed because they would have been highly disruptive to existing institutions. Representative regionalization would be much less disruptive because it would keep existing local governments intact while promoting more efficient and democratic decision-making at the regional level.

