



NS GEOGRAPHIC NAMING PROCESS

Updated August 2023

THE ROLE OF GEONOVA IN GEOGRAPHIC NAMING

GeoNOVA's role is to administer the geographic naming process in Nova Scotia. GeoNOVA is an active participant on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) which is the national coordinating body for geographic naming and establishing guidelines and principles.

GeoNOVA maintains the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Database which contains all official and previously official names in the province. The process includes adding new names or changing existing names for geographic features such as lakes, rivers, populated places, and more. GeoNOVA does not have jurisdiction to name incorporated places or other geographic features named through legislation, however, ensures the database contains all name changes.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL RESIDENTS IN GEOGRAPHIC NAMING

Public participation is an integral aspect of the naming process. Our goal is to empower local-resident decision making to ensure that geographic naming is a democratic and inclusive process.

WHO CAN APPLY TO ADD OR CHANGE A NAME:

- People eligible to vote in a Nova Scotia provincial election

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS:

- Existing names that may cause harm
- Names of indigenous origin

THE PROCESS TO ADD OR CHANGE AN OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHIC NAME:

STEP 1 APPLICATION (COMPLETED BY APPLICANT)

For a new name or name change, an application form is filled out with as much detail as possible. The applicant will also consider or include the following:

- Any other names used or previously used
- The meaning and verified spelling
- A current map including the location and size of the feature being named
- Alignment with the GNBC Guiding Principles¹
- The reason for the name change
- Why the change is important

GeoNOVA will assist wherever possible in the completion of Step 1.

STEP 2 APPLICATION REVIEW (COMPLETED BY GEONOVA)

Research and appropriate engagement with stakeholders are carried out to ensure the proposed change conforms to the GNBC's Guiding Principles and General Procedures for Geographical Naming. The application form is reviewed by the Nova Scotia representative on the GNBC and advanced to the next step if it meets the guidelines. Otherwise, the application is rejected and communicated to the applicant.

¹ <https://geonova.novascotia.ca/2011-gnbc-principles-procedures>

STEP 3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (ADMINISTERED BY GEONOVA, PARTICIPATED IN BY LOCAL RESIDENTS)

If the application meets the criteria to move ahead, the level of local-resident engagement is determined. All changes are determined with a vote.

- Any changes to community² names require public engagement with residents of the local community. This may consist of in-person and/or virtual sessions and surveys. There may be name suggestion and selection activities in some cases.
- Other applications for either a new name or a direct replacement of one name with another name: a local-resident survey will determine if the change is supported.

Name suggestion and selection criteria must adhere to principles and procedures outlined by the GNBC.

Adherence to the following local-resident voting procedure will ensure that a fair and accurate measure of the resident's wishes can be documented. Participants must:

- Reside within the boundary of the community or in most cases within one kilometre of the geographic feature.
- Be eligible to vote in a Nova Scotia provincial election.

If the area is unpopulated, participants may include special interest groups for remote features (e.g., fishers, trail users, etc.).

There may be additional stakeholder engagement by GeoNOVA during this step, for example municipalities, special interest groups, or property owners, etc.

STEP 4 DECISION AND FOLLOW UP (COMPLETED BY GEONOVA)

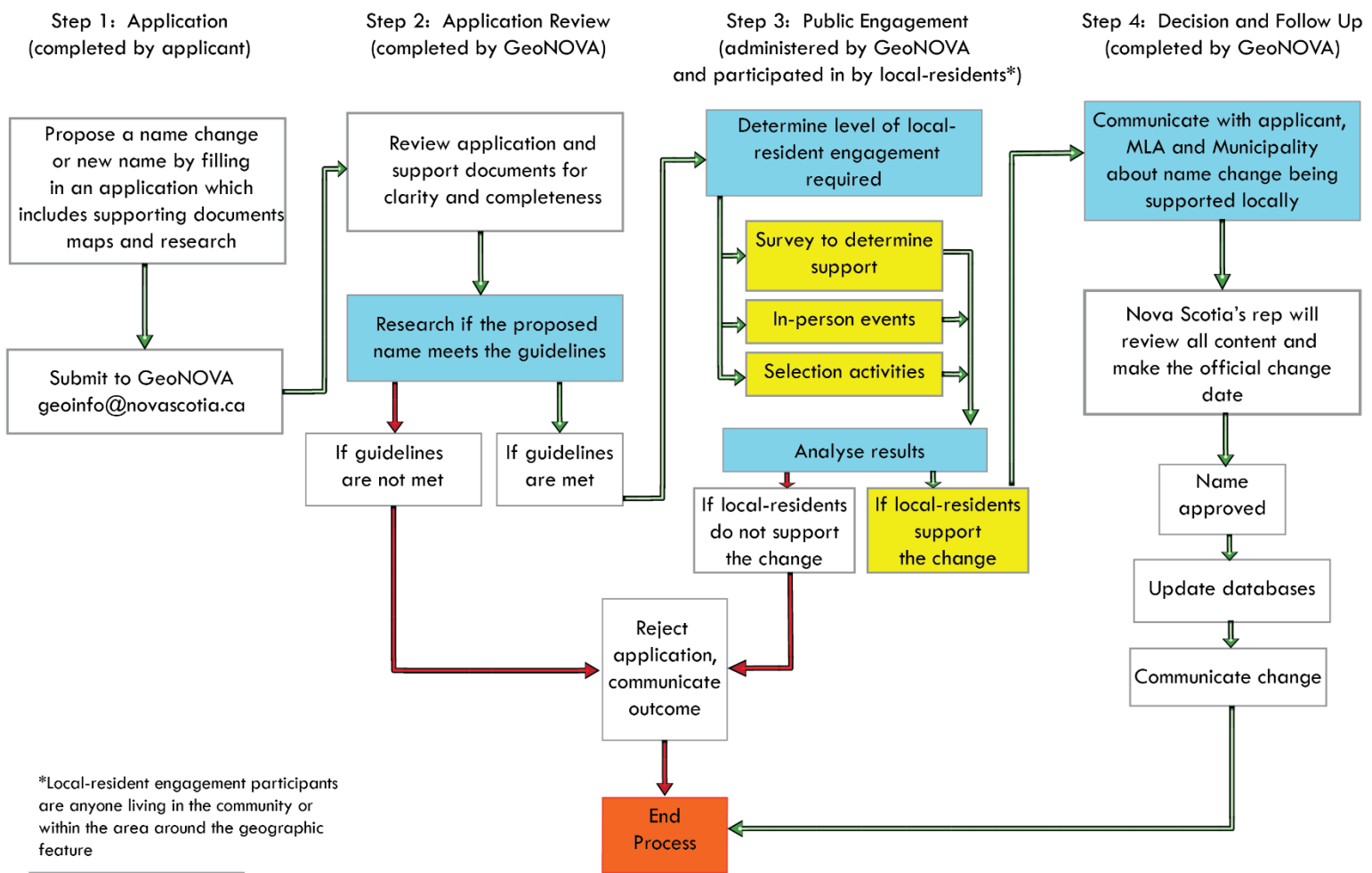
- Public engagement results are shared with local municipalities and MLAs.
- The Nova Scotia representative of the GNBC reviews the results of public engagement³.
- Relevant databases are updated to include the new or revised name if the application is approved.
- If not approved, the application is rejected and communicated to the applicant.
- The results of the application are communicated with the public.

QUESTIONS, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the naming process or would like to discuss this in more detail, contact GeoNOVA by emailing geoinfo@novascotia.ca or by visiting nsplacenames.ca.

² Community refers to an official community in Nova Scotia. A community is listed in the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Database, has a boundary approved by the municipality in which it resides, and is included in civic addressing.

³ Final decision resides with the Nova Scotia GNBC representative.



*Local-resident engagement participants are anyone living in the community or within the area around the geographic feature

- residents participate
- partners participate