



# NS GEOGRAPHIC NAMING PROCESS

## THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICES (GIS) IN GEOGRAPHIC NAMING

The GIS section's role is to administer the geographic naming process in accordance with the policies, principles and rules set by the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC).

As part of the mandate to administer the geographic naming process, GIS also maintains the Nova Scotia Geographic Names Database which contains all official and unofficial names in the province.

Community input is an important aspect of the naming process and ultimately, the decision to add a new name or change to a current-official name would be to respect the stance of the community throughout the process outlined below.

## THE PROCESS TO ADD OR CHANGE AN OFFICIAL GEOGRAPHIC NAME:

### Step 1

The applicant (a committee, resident, municipal contact, etc.) will propose the change or addition of a name by filling out an APPLICATION form.

The name change or addition **MUST** align with the GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

New names or name changes **must have strong support** and/or **long-standing local use** of residents in a particular area. Unnamed features without a form in use locally should be named according to **COMMEMORATIVE NAMING GUIDELINES**.

Along with this submission, the applicant shall include as much background material as possible supporting the name. This could be in the form of old maps, historical documents, old deeds, etc. It is also essential that the extent of the community or feature be identified on a current map to prevent misinterpretation of the location and size.

- Submit completed application form

### Step 2

The application form will be approved or rejected by The Nova Scotia representative on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), after reviewing the submitted application. Further research and field investigation may be completed to ensure the proposed change conforms to the Guiding Principles and General Procedures for Geographical Naming developed by the GNBC.

- Application Rejected – end of process

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- Application approved – proceed to step 3

### Step 3

Once the application has been approved to proceed, the applicant will now ensure community support for the name change or addition. This is indicated through a community petition/plebiscite where residents will provide their signature, address and phone number in support of the proposed name. A map outlining the extent of the

feature or community is to accompany the petition and will be provided by GIS. Opposition to a proposed name will also be considered. Completely new names or name changes of a sensitive nature **may** require Cabinet approval.

Please adhere to the following voting procedure to ensure that a fair and accurate measure of the citizens' wishes can be documented. Eligible voters should:

- live within the boundaries of the community/village;
- live in a home declared as a principle residence;
- live in a principle residence on a permanent basis;
- be over the age of 18 on the date of the plebiscite.

Community Petition Complete

#### Step 4

The petition/plebiscite is then submitted to the corresponding Municipal Council and is asked to support the proposed name with a motion of Council. A letter of support from the local MLA must also be obtained.

- Municipal Council motion approval letter for the proposed name
- Letter of support from MLA of the region the proposed name is within

#### Step 5

The petition/plebiscite and a copy of the Council minutes, letter of support from the MLA are then sent to the Provincial Member of the Geographical Names Board of Canada at GIS.

- Proposal Package submitted:
  - Petition
  - Council Minutes
  - Letter of Support from MLA
  - Other relevant information

#### Step 6

The Nova Scotia representative on the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) reviews the proposal for completeness. In rare circumstances, after approval is given, a Report and Recommendation (R&R) for Cabinet is prepared. In cases where the changes are minor, such as spelling corrections, or small feature name changes, no R&R is required, but rather the decision would be made by the Nova Scotia member to the GNBC.

The Gazetteer of Canada and the Nova Scotia Place Names Database are updated to include the new or revised name When Cabinet approval has been received, or a decision made.

- Communication, to all parties involved, of the decision (Approved/Not Approved)

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#### QUESTIONS, OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the naming process or if you would like to discuss this in more detail, please feel free to contact GIS by emailing [geoinfo@novascotia.ca](mailto:geoinfo@novascotia.ca) or by visiting [geonova.ca](http://geonova.ca)