



Mackenzie County

Mackenzie County

Governance Options Review - Engagement Summary

Report

November 2024





ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. Is an award-winning full-service consulting firm dedicated to working with all levels of government and the private sector to deliver planning and design solutions for transportation, water, and land projects.

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Engagement Process.....	1
1.2	Engagement Opportunities.....	2
2.0	Engagement Communications	3
3.0	About the Governance Options	4
4.0	What We Heard	4
4.1	Key Highlights	4
4.2	Where do people live?.....	5
4.3	Ranking of Governance Options	6
4.4	How Important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County	10
4.5	Other comments to share about the Governance Options under review by Mackenzie County.....	13
4.6	Key Highlights by Geographic Location.....	13
4.7	Observations from Key Highlights by Geographic Location	52
5.0	Next Steps	54

APPENDICES

Appendix A Mackenzie County Governance Options: Open House Display Boards

TABLES

Table 4.1:	The communities in which the survey respondents lived (671 of 674 responses).....	5
Table 4.2:	Preference for Option #1 – Status Quo (668 of 674 responses).	7
Table 4.3:	Preference for Option #2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10) (668 of 674 responses).	8
Table 4.4:	Preference for Option #3 – Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 (668 of 674 responses).....	9
Table 4.5:	Preference for Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards (668 of 674 responses).....	10
Table 4.6:	Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County (657 of 674 responses).	11
Table 4.7:	Ward 1 survey responses for governance options preference.	14
Table 4.8:	Ward 1: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	15
Table 4.9:	Ward 2: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.....	17
Table 4.10:	Ward 2: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	18
Table 4.11:	Ward 3: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.....	20
Table 4.12:	Ward 3: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	21
Table 4.13:	Ward 4: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.....	23



Table 4.14:	Ward 4: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	24
Table 4.15:	Ward 5: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	26
Table 4.16:	Ward 5: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	27
Table 4.17:	Ward 6: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	29
Table 4.18:	Ward 6: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	30
Table 4.19:	Ward 7: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	32
Table 4.20:	Ward 7: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	33
Table 4.21:	Ward 8: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	35
Table 4.22:	Ward 8: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	36
Table 4.23:	Ward 9: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	38
Table 4.24:	Ward 9: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	39
Table 4.25:	Ward 10: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	41
Table 4.26:	Ward 10: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	42
Table 4.27:	Town of Rainbow Lake: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	44
Table 4.28:	Town of Rainbow Lake: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	45
Table 4.29:	Town of High Level: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	47
Table 4.30:	Town of High Level: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	48
Table 4.31:	First Nations Resident and Other Survey Responses: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.	50
Table 4.32:	First Nations Resident and Other Survey Responses: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.	51



1.0 Introduction

Mackenzie County (the County) retained ISL Engineering and Land Services (ISL), a third-party consultant, to conduct a public engagement process to gather feedback from residents on four governance options under review for the County. It should be noted that the financial assessment of possible cost savings or implications of each option was not able to be conducted within the timeframe available for this engagement process.

Feedback from residents will be included in a comprehensive engagement report that is shared with Council to inform their motion for the governance option they recommend to Alberta Municipal Affairs. The engagement report and County Council's motion will be shared with Alberta Municipal Affairs by December 1, 2024 to determine the next steps for Mackenzie County pertaining to its governance structure.

The County has grown significantly with a population increase of 9.83% in the last five years. The population is currently 14,380 in 2024 and due to the increased population, it is necessary to review whether the ward boundaries fairly and effectively represent the citizens of the County. The County currently has 10 wards, with each ward having one Councillor.

Under the Alberta *Municipal Government Act* (sections 148 and 150), a municipality's council has the authority to make changes to its ward boundaries through the passing of a bylaw.

This engagement report is a summary of what we heard throughout the engagement process for the Mackenzie County Governance project. Responses were collected through surveys submitted online or by paper and submitted at the in-person open houses, dropped off at the County office or sent to the project team by email. The engagement process provided an opportunity for interested residents to provide their feedback on the four governance options under consideration by the County, it was not a vote. The findings outlined in this report are not statistically valid as public engagement reflects the views of those who choose to participate. This is different than market research where participants are randomly selected, allowing the results to be representative of the broader population.

Respondents were able to provide more than one response per IP address. This allows each person who may be using a communal computer or computer network (e.g., in a multi-family home, in an office, or at a library, etc.) to be able to respond to the survey. In instances where more than two responses have been submitted by the same IP address, we have noted this in the following report.

1.1 Engagement Process

The engagement process for the governance options review was completed in November 2024 with the purpose of gathering feedback from residents on the governance options. Input collected will be used to inform Council's motion on the governance option they recommend to Alberta Municipal Affairs. Alberta Municipal Affairs will review the engagement report and Council's motion to determine the next steps for Mackenzie County's governance review.

1.2 Engagement Opportunities

Engagement opportunities consisted of an online survey, a virtual open house and four in-person open houses. The information within the virtual and at the in-person open houses contained the same information to ensure consistency between the engagement tools that were used for the engagement process. The maps and key details about the four governance options were also included in the online survey.

Survey

A survey was available from November 6 to 20, 2024 and it received **674** responses. Paper surveys were available at the in-person open houses and downloadable versions were available online to members of the public. People were able to pick-up/drop off paper surveys at the County offices or send their surveys to the Project Team. A link to the survey and virtual open house tool was available on the County's project website and on the display boards at the in-person open houses.

Virtual Open House

The virtual open house (VOH) was an interactive webpage available to the public from November 6 to 20, 2024 and **370** people accessed the webpage. Members of the public could navigate through a virtual space to learn more about the project through display boards. The display boards contained relevant background information and project timelines to help people better understand the project and respond to the survey questions. A link to the survey was also included in the VOH.

Open House

The open houses were an in-person opportunity for the public to meet with the project team and, similar to the VOH, provided the public with background information, project timelines and information to respond to the survey through display boards. A link to the survey and VOH were made available at the events. In total, approximately **295** people attended the four open houses, which were held on:

- Tuesday, November 12, 2024 from 4:30 - 6:30 PM at High Level Rural Hall (17242 Hwy 58, SW 3-110-17-W5M) (approximately 80 participants)
- Tuesday, November 12, 2024 from 7:30 - 9:30 PM at Fort Vermilion Community Cultural Complex (5001-44th Avenue, Fort Vermilion) (approximately 100 participants)
- Wednesday, November 13, 2024 from 4:30 - 6:30 PM at Buffalo Head Prairie School (104336 Highway 697, SE 23-104-15-W5M) (approximately 15 participants)
- Wednesday, November 13, 2024 and from 7:30 - 9:30 PM at La Crete Heritage Center (15439 TWP RD 1060, NE 32-105-15-W5M) (approximately 100 participants)



■ 2.0 Engagement Communications

Residents were able to access details about the engagement opportunities shared publicly through a variety of communication channels.

To promote the project and advertise the engagement opportunities, the following communication channels were used:

- Project webpage on the County website
- Social Media
- Newspaper Advertising
- Mailed letters to the Town of Rainbow Lake and Town of High Level
- Mailed flyer/newsletter to Mackenzie County residents
- County Councillors and organizations also shared information about the engagement opportunities with their contacts through their communication channels.

3.0 About the Governance Options

Through the virtual open house, online survey and in-person open houses, we shared information about the four different governance options for people to review. Please refer to Appendix A to view the Mackenzie County Governance Options display boards, which includes a detailed summary of each governance option. The options include:

- Governance Option #1 - Status Quo
- Governance Option #2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10)
- Governance Option #3 – Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10
- Governance Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards

4.0 What We Heard

4.1 Key Highlights

A total of 674 responses were received for the survey (paper and online).

Based on the survey 668 of 674 responses received to the question asking respondents to rank the governance options from 1 – most preferred to 4 - least preferred, we have highlighted the most and least preferred options.

Observations on Most Preferred Option

38% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3 = Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 as their most preferred, followed by:

- 28% for Governance Option # 2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10);
- 26% for Governance Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
- 10% for Governance Option #1 – Status Quo

Observations on Least Preferred

51% of respondents selected Governance Option #2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10), followed by:

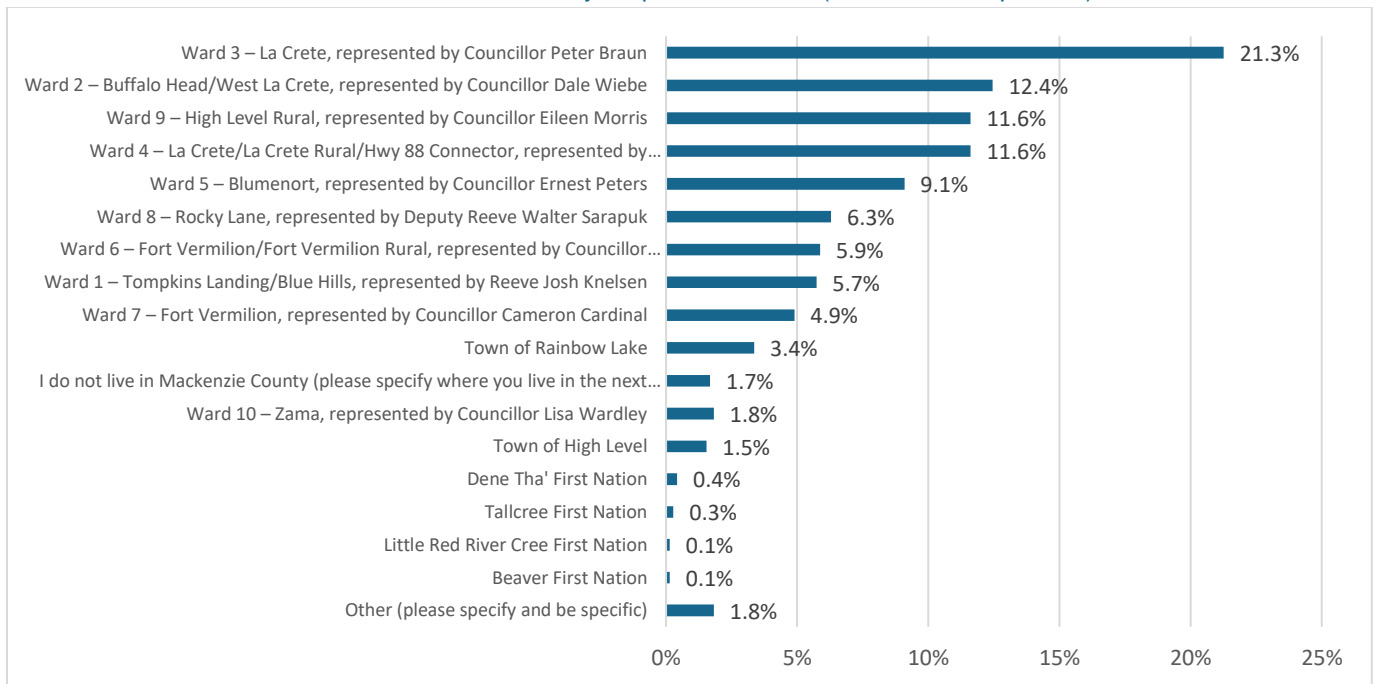
- 30% for Governance Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
- 15% for Governance Option #1 – Status Quo; and
- 4% for Governance Option #3 – Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10

The following section is a more detailed summary of what we heard from responses to the paper and online surveys.

4.2 Where do people live?

We asked people to indicate where they live. The majority of people we indicated they lived in Ward 3 (21.7%), Ward 2 (12.7%), Ward 9 (11.8%) and Ward 4 (11.8%).

Table 4.1: The communities in which the survey respondents lived (671 of 674 responses).¹



Other verbatim responses:

- Rocky Mountain House
- Chateh
- I live in Mackenzie County
- Town of Rainbow Lake
- Rainbow Lake
- Grande Prairie
- Grande Prairie
- Fort Smith NT
- I was born and raised in Fort Vermilion and currently reside in Sundre Alberta..but will be moving back.
- High Level
- Edmonton
- Town of La Crete
- Buffalo Head Prairie

¹ Text captions cut off in Table 4.1:

- Ward 4 – La Crete/La Crete Rural/Hwy 88 Connector, represented by Councillor David Driedger
- Ward 6 – Fort Vermilion/Fort Vermilion Rural, represented by Councillor Garrell Smith
- I do not live in Mackenzie County (please specify where you live in the next question)

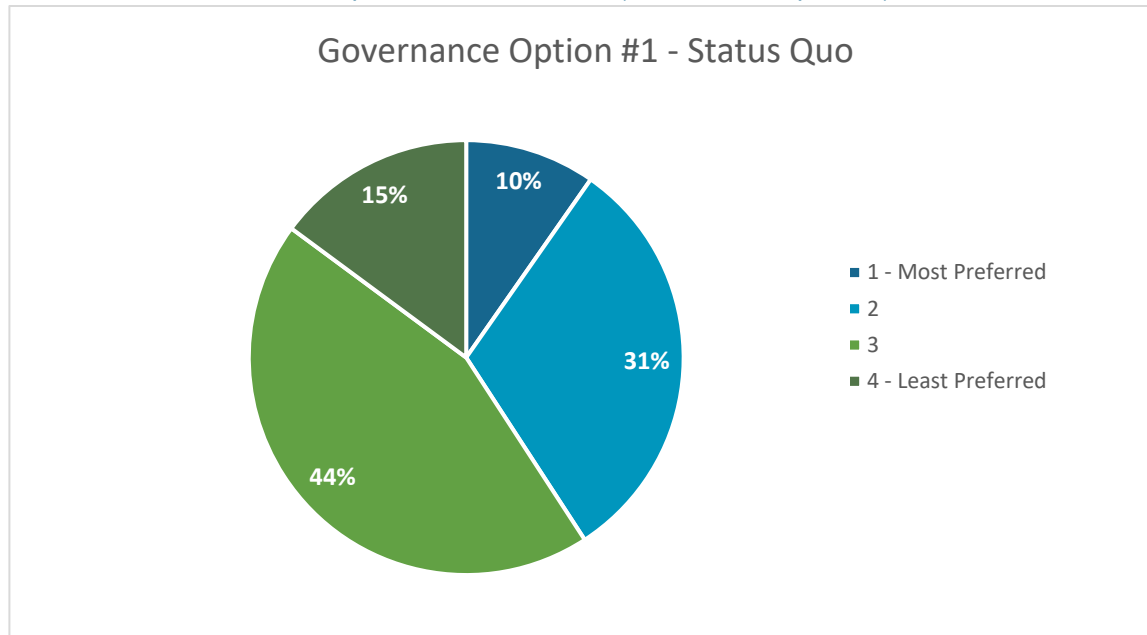
- New subdivision on 43 ave
- Sexsmith
- Treaty 8 member
- Dene Tha' Territory is bigger than Mackenzie county. Mackenzie county sits in DTFN Territory. just so you know.
- I prefer not to say.
- Mackenzie county
- Mackenzie county
- Own acreage in MD #23
- I was raised in Rocky Lane from 4 to 22, I currently don't reside in area but have land in the area
- I prefer not to say.
- Called fort vermilion but we live in blumenort.
- 11 Y

4.3 Ranking of Governance Options

We asked people to rank the four governance options for Mackenzie County from most preferred to least preferred for, with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred. We then asked people to explain the reasoning for their response in the ranking question. The following is a summary of what people shared for feedback and what they liked and disliked for each governance option.

Overall, there were mixed opinions on the governance structure, with the majority of concerns relating to the topic of fairness. With differing opinions of what is fair, many people wanted to reduce or amalgamate certain wards whereas many others wanted to create two municipalities or have Mackenzie County remain as status quo. Many comments reflect diverse opinions between the northern and southern communities within the County.

Table 4.2: Preference for Option #1 – Status Quo (668 of 674 responses).



For option #1, maintaining the status quo was most preferred by only 10% of respondents, with the majority (44%) ranking it as the third preferred option.

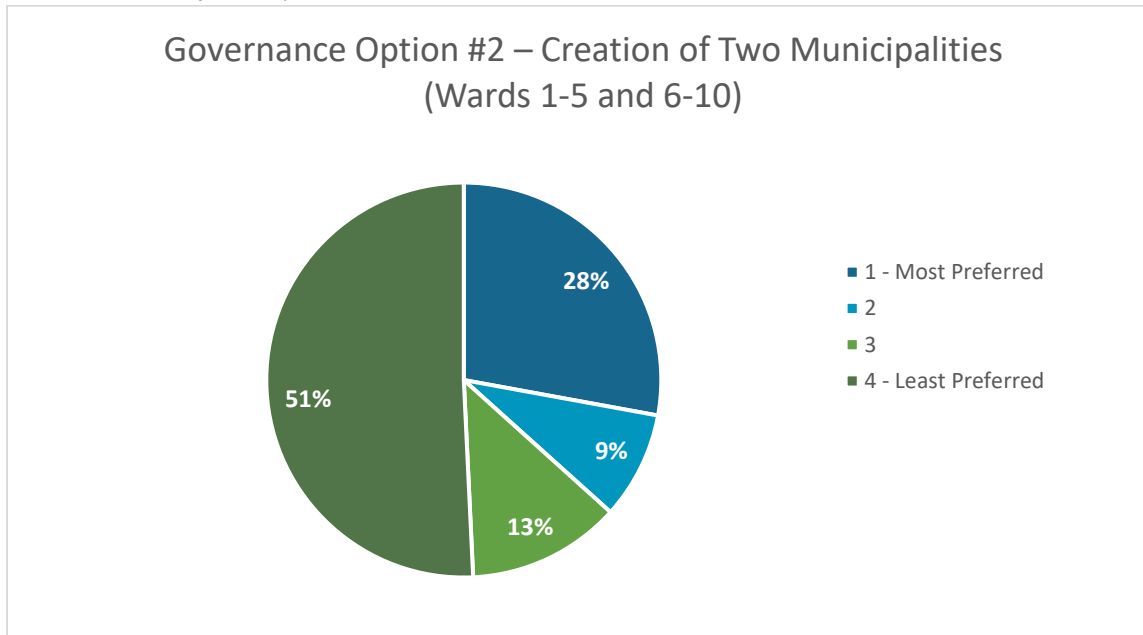
What people liked about Option #1:

- There were opinions that the status quo option would keep the 2/3rds majority voting structure in place, which was important to some respondents.
- Some people also noted the importance of retaining the specialized municipality status and the benefits of this status.
- Some respondents were open to maintaining the status quo if significant changes are made to ensure fair representation.
- A few respondents believed that the current governance structure does not need a major overhaul and only require some adjustments to better reflect the current population distribution.
- A few people did not believe the governance structure is an issue and changing the structure would not lead to any changes. Some respondents also noted that the councillors of the County are causing issues about governance.

What people disliked about Option #1:

- Some respondents felt that maintaining the status quo does not address the current issues of inequity and representation. They believed that the current system allows certain areas of the County to dominate decision-making and does not provide fair representation for all areas of the County.
- Some people commented that allocation of amenities and services to different regions are currently not equally distributed, with most resources benefiting wards 1-5.
- There were concerns that the status quo option would not lead to any significant improvements or changes, and that existing problems will continue within the county.

Table 4.3: Preference for Option #2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10) (668 of 674 responses).



For option #2, creating two municipalities was least preferred by 51% of respondents whereas 28% of people listed this option as their most preferred option.

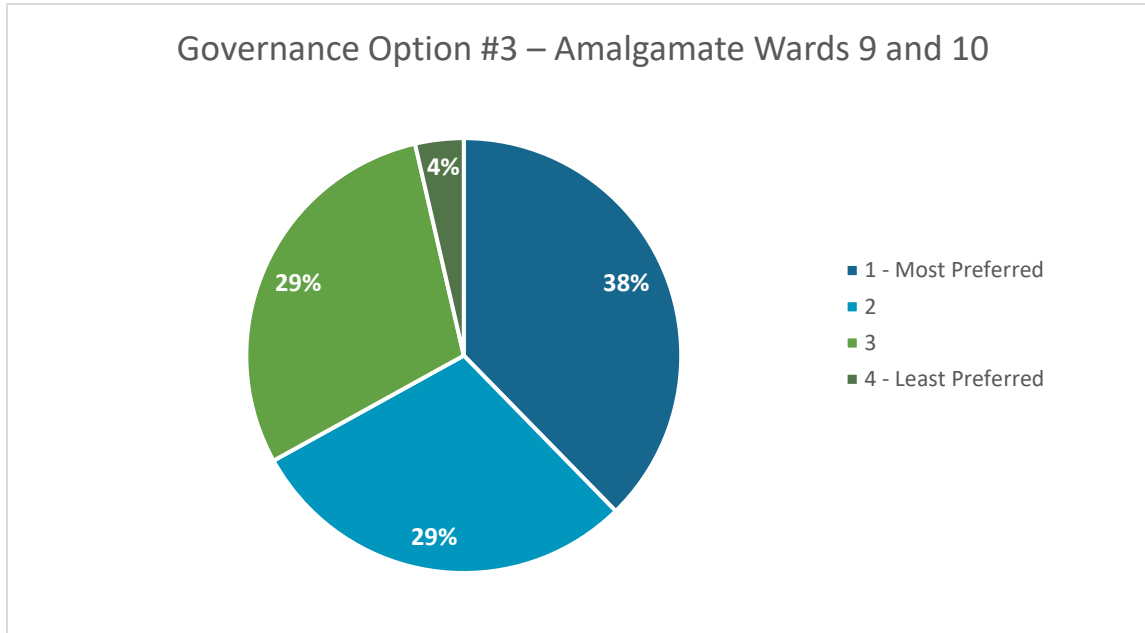
What people liked about Option #2:

- Many respondents believed that creating two municipalities would lead to better governance and fairer representation based on the unique needs and interest of communities. They felt that the current system is biased towards certain regions like wards 1-5.
- Some respondents who liked option #2 said that two municipalities would allow for more local decision-making, better and more fair resource allocation, and economic growth. They noted that the northern areas of the County do not currently receive adequate resources and support from the County.
- People noted that this option would address issues of inequity between the northern and southern areas of the County, ensuring that all areas have a voice in governance and addressing current power imbalances in decision-making.

What people disliked about Option #2:

- Some respondents were concerned about the potential costs and complexities associated with creating two municipalities. They believed that this option could lead to increased taxes and administrative costs.
- There were concerns that two municipalities might create further divisions and conflicts between the northern and southern areas of the County, rather than encouraging cooperation and collaboration.
- A few respondents felt that this option is costly and could lead to challenges in resource allocation and service delivery.

Table 4.4: Preference for Option #3 – Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 (668 of 674 responses).



For option #3, amalgamating wards 9 and 10 was most preferred by 38% of respondents. Only 4% listed it as the least preferred option.

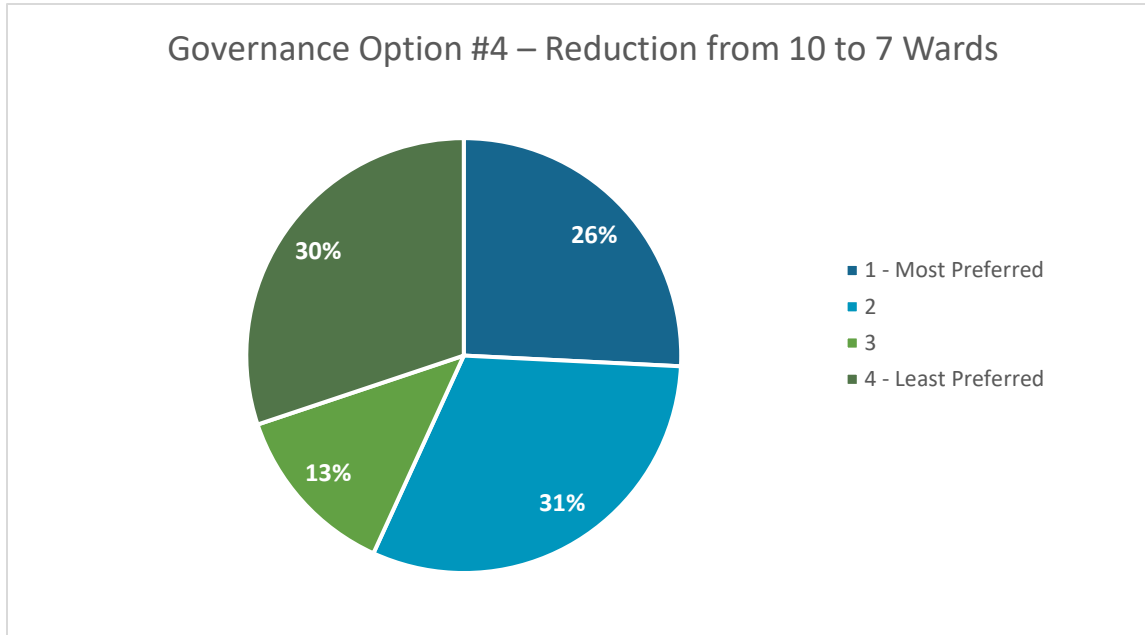
What people liked about Option #3:

- Supporters of Option 3 appreciated its cost-saving potential.
- They believed that amalgamating wards 9 and 10 would lead to more efficient governance and better representation by population.
- This option was seen as a way to streamline operations and reduce the number of councillors, which would result in cost savings and more effective decision-making.
- Some respondents mentioned that ward 10 has a very low population and does not warrant its own councillor. They believed that combining it with ward 9 would be a more efficient use of resources.

What people disliked about Option #3:

- Some respondents disliked the idea of amalgamating wards 9 and 10, as they felt it would not provide adequate representation for the areas involved. They believed that this option might lead to underrepresentation of certain regions.
- Some people said that this option would only benefit southern communities at the expense of northern communities.
- A few respondents mentioned that this option might not lead to substantial cost savings or improvements in efficiency, and that existing problems will continue within the County.

Table 4.5: Preference for Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards (668 of 674 responses).



For option #4, 26% ranked it as most preferred, 31% ranked it as their second preference but just as many (30%) ranked it as the least preferred option.

What people liked about Option #4:

- Some people liked option 4 as it would improve representation by population while maintaining a manageable number of wards.
- Some people noted that they liked this option due to its potential to save costs and make the governance structure more efficient.

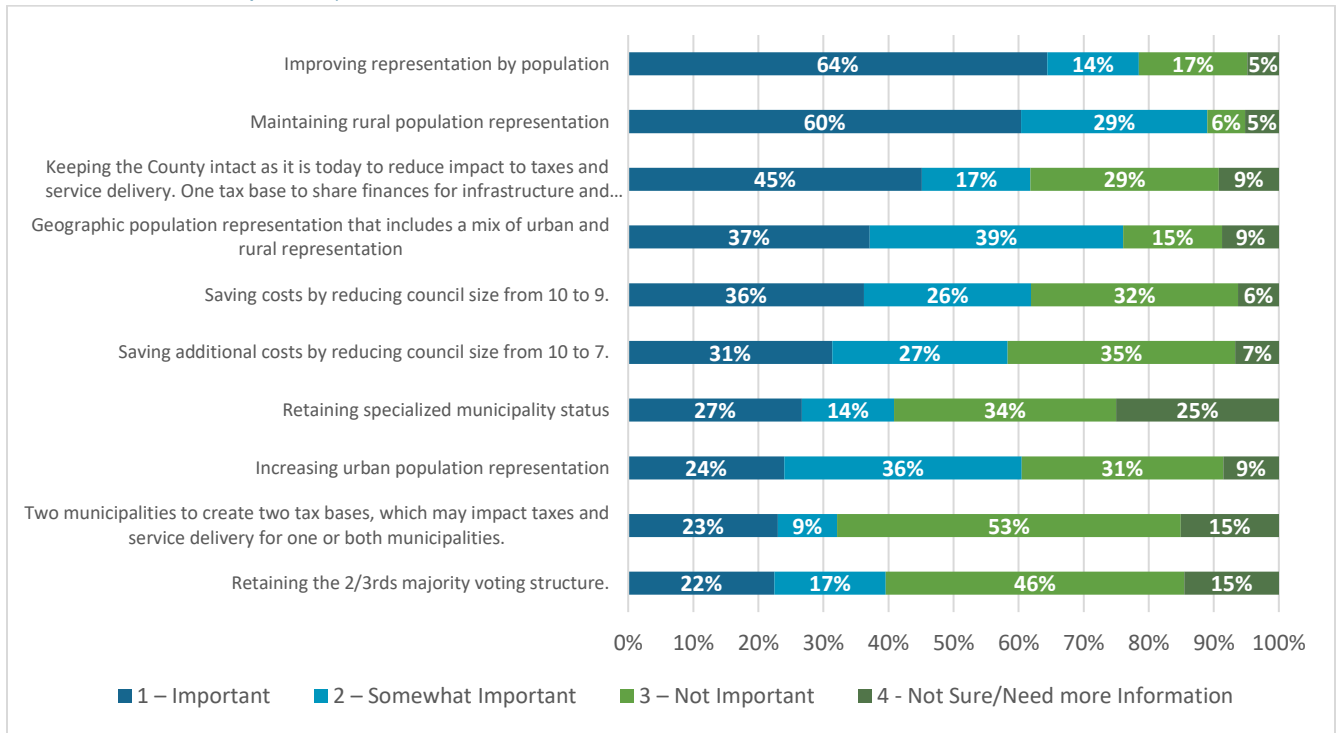
What people disliked about Option #4:

- There were concerns that reducing the number of wards would cause a reduction in unique community representation. Some people noted that Mackenzie County is made up of numerous communities with unique needs that require representation within County governance.
- Similar to option #3, some people said that this option would only benefit southern communities at the expense of northern communities.
- Similar to option #3, a few respondents mentioned that this option might not lead to substantial cost savings or improvements in efficiency.

4.4 How Important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County

We asked people to indicate the level of importance of 10 items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County.

Table 4.6: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County (657 of 674 responses).²



The following is a summary of the level of importance allocated to each item relating to the governance options.

Improving representation by population:

- Almost two thirds of respondents (64%) said that this item is important to consider, with 78% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- 17% of people said it was not important.
- 5% were unsure/needed more information.

Maintaining rural population representation:

- 60% of respondents said that maintaining rural population is important with 89% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- 6% said it was not important.
- 5% were unsure/needed more information.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery. One tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County:

- Just under half (45%) of people said keeping the County intact is important, with a total of 62% of people saying it has some level of importance.

² Text captions cut off in Table 4.6: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

- 29% of people said that keeping the County intact was not important.
- 9% were unsure/needed more information.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation:

- 37% of people said that this item was important, with a total of 76% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- 15% said it was not important.
- 9% were unsure/needed more information.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9:

- 36% of people said that saving costs by reducing council size was important, with a total of 62% noting that it has some level of importance.
- 32% said it was not important.
- 6% were unsure/needed more information.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7:

- 31% of people said that saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 was important, with 58% of people noting that it has some level of importance.
- 35% said it was not important.
- 7% were unsure/needed more information.
- Overall, reducing council size from 10 to 7 received slightly less support than reducing council size from 10 to 9.

Retaining specialized municipality status:

- 27% of people said that retaining specialized municipality status was important, with a total of 41% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- 34% said it was not important.
- A quarter of people (25%) were unsure/needed more information.
- Out of all the items listed, people were the most unsure about this item or needed more information.

Increasing urban population representation:

- 24% of people said that increasing urban population representation was important, with 60% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- 31% said it was not important.
- 9% were unsure/needed more information.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities:

- 23% of people said that creating two municipalities is important with a total of 32% of people saying it has some level of importance.
- Just over half of respondents (53%) said it was not important.
- 15% were unsure/needed more information.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure:

- 23% of people said that retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure was important, with a total of 50% of people saying it has some level of importance
- 46% of people said it was not important.
- 15% were unsure/needed more information.

4.5 Other comments to share about the Governance Options under review by Mackenzie County

We asked people to share any other comments they may have about the governance options. Below is a summary of what was shared. Many respondents reiterated what they liked and disliked within this section:

- Overall, there were mixed opinions on the governance structures, with some wanting to reduce or amalgamate certain wards and some people wanting the creation of two municipalities.
- A few people did not like any of the options or only supported one of the options out of the four.
- Some people wanted to eliminate the 2/3rds majority voting structure saying it is not democratic, whereas others think retaining the structure is important.
- Some people commented that La Crete should be its own town and wanted that to be considered as an option.
- A few people wanted to see better inclusion of First Nations and Métis communities and people when it comes to engagement and considering the governance options.
- There were a few comments about greater transparency in engagement and in the decision-making process. A few people felt that the current engagement process was insufficient, felt rushed, and shared their distrust of the County and its councillors.
- Some people shared concerns about the divisive sentiments in the County and see the need for County residents to work together.
- Some people shared that they would have liked to have the detailed financial considerations (impacts and savings) of each option to inform their feedback about their preferred governance options.

4.6 Key Highlights by Geographic Location

In the section below, the highlights of how residents by geographic location ranked the governance options and the level of importance for key items related to governance options for Mackenzie County. This information illustrates how feedback from residents about the governance options or what's important to them may differ based on where they reside in the County or beyond.

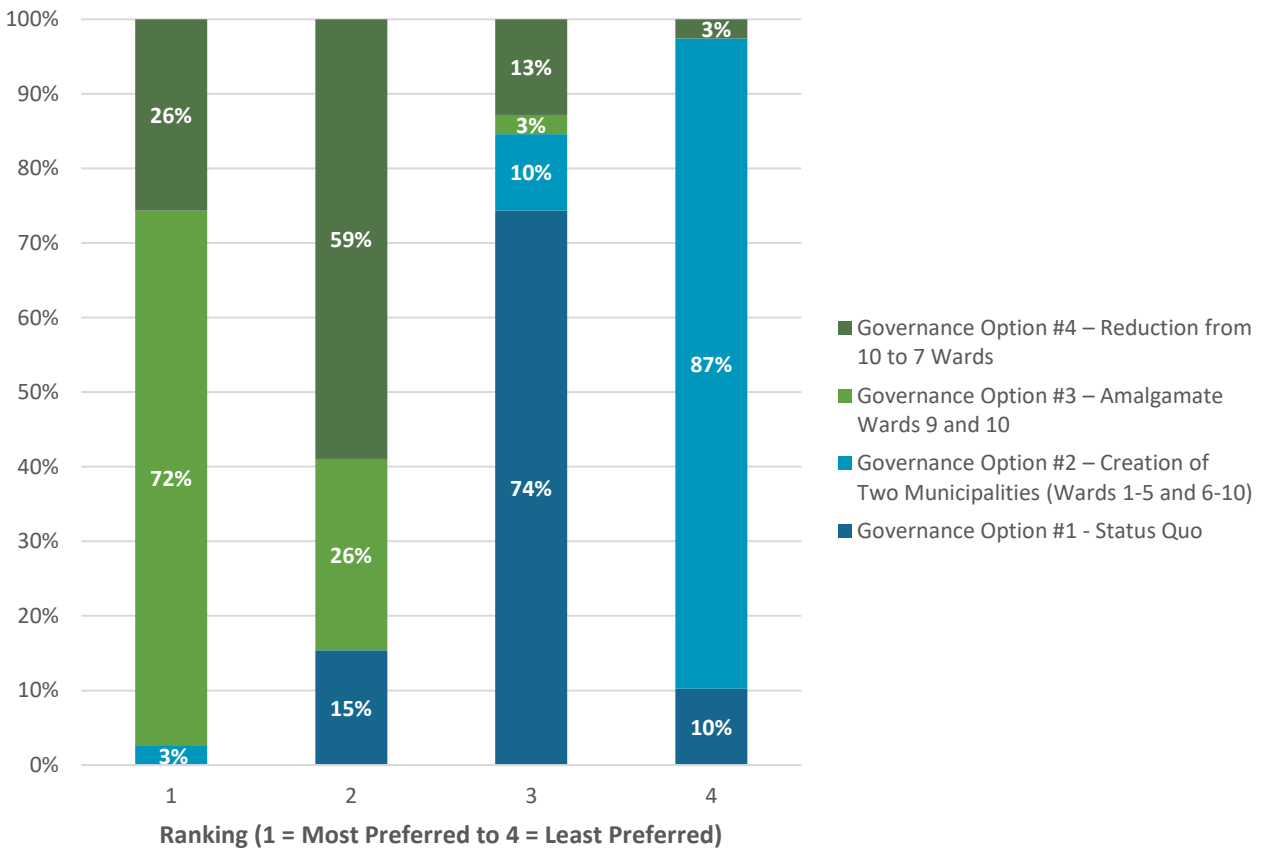
4.6.1 Ward 1 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 59 identified themselves as living within Ward 1. One of these 59 respondents also identified themselves as also living within Ward 2 while two indicated themselves as also living within Ward 3. The reasons are unknown for the three respondents indicating two different wards. Such could be attributed to them being unsure of precisely which side of a ward boundary they reside or them having land holdings in more than one ward.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 39 of the 59 respondents answered this question. The other 20 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.7: Ward 1 survey responses for governance options preference.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 72% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 26% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 3% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo.

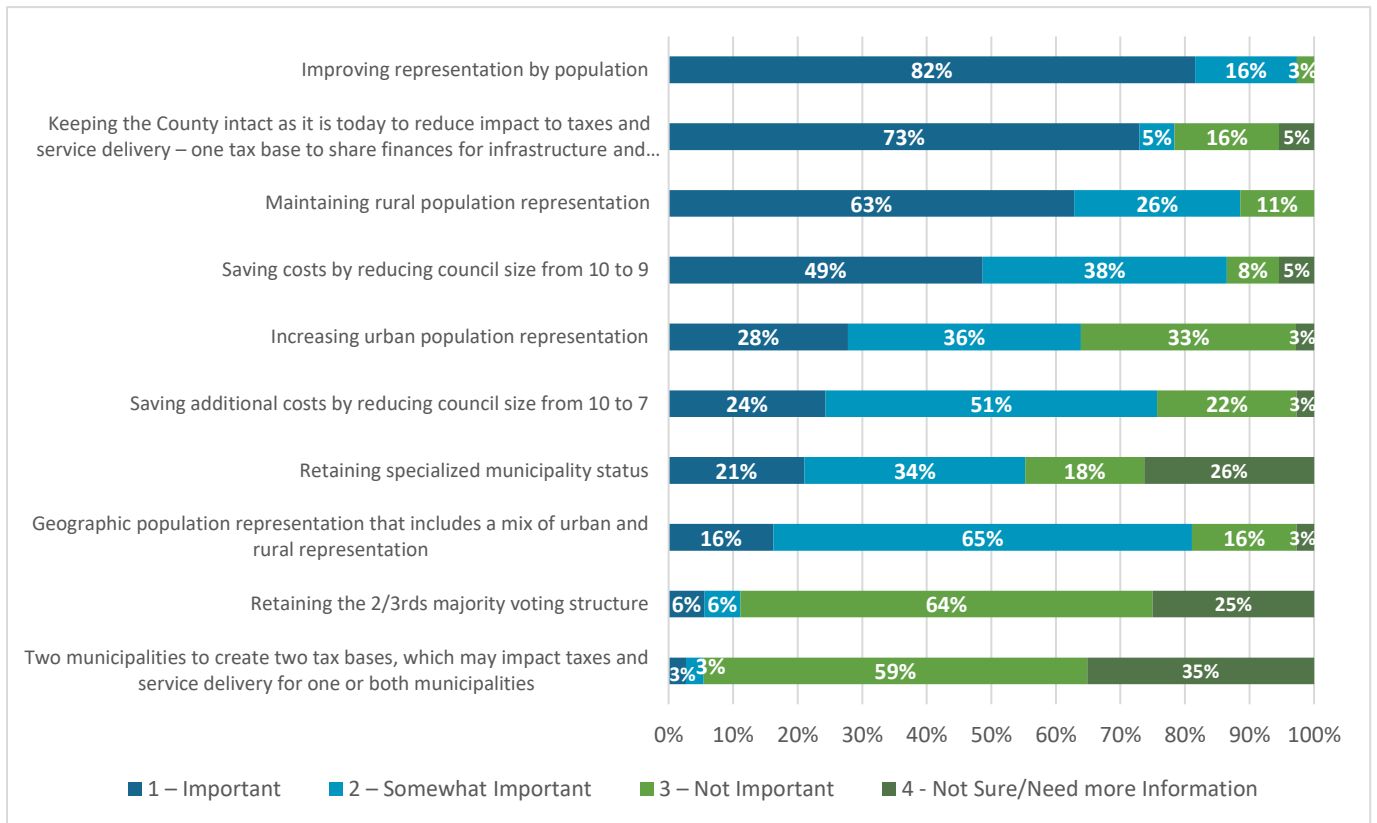
Observations on Least Preferred

- 87% selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 10% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 3% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?³

- 38 of the 59 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 21 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.8: Ward 1: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (38 respondents)

- 34% of respondents felt this was **somewhat important**.

Improving representation by population (38 respondents)

- 82% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (35 respondents)

- 63% felt this was **important**.

³ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (36 respondents)

- 36% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (37 respondents)

- 65% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (37 respondents)

- 73% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (37 respondents)

- 59% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (36 respondents)

- 64% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (37 respondents)

- 49% felt this was **important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (37 respondents)

- 51% felt this was **somewhat important**.

4.6.2 Ward 2 Resident Survey Response Highlights

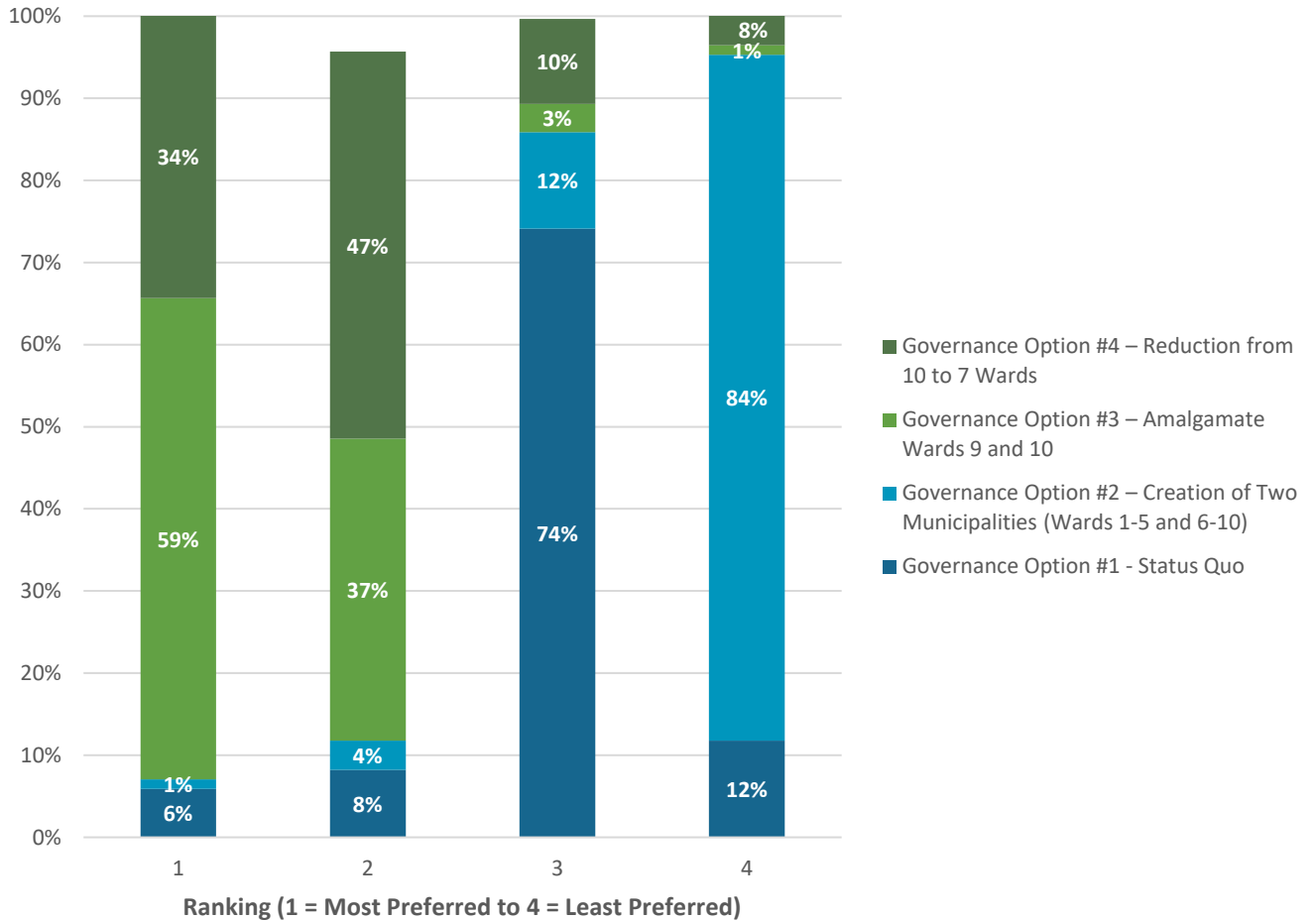
Of the 674 total respondents, 151 identified themselves as living within Ward 2. One of these 151 respondents also identified themselves as also living within Ward 1. The reasons are unknown for the one respondent indicating two different wards. Such could be attributed to them being unsure of precisely which side of a ward boundary they reside or them having land holdings in more than one ward.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).⁴

- 87 of the 151 respondents answered this question. The other 64 respondents skipped this question.

⁴ Note: not all bars add up to 100% in this table as a few respondents did not rank all options.

Table 4.9: Ward 2: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 59% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 34% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 6% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 1% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.

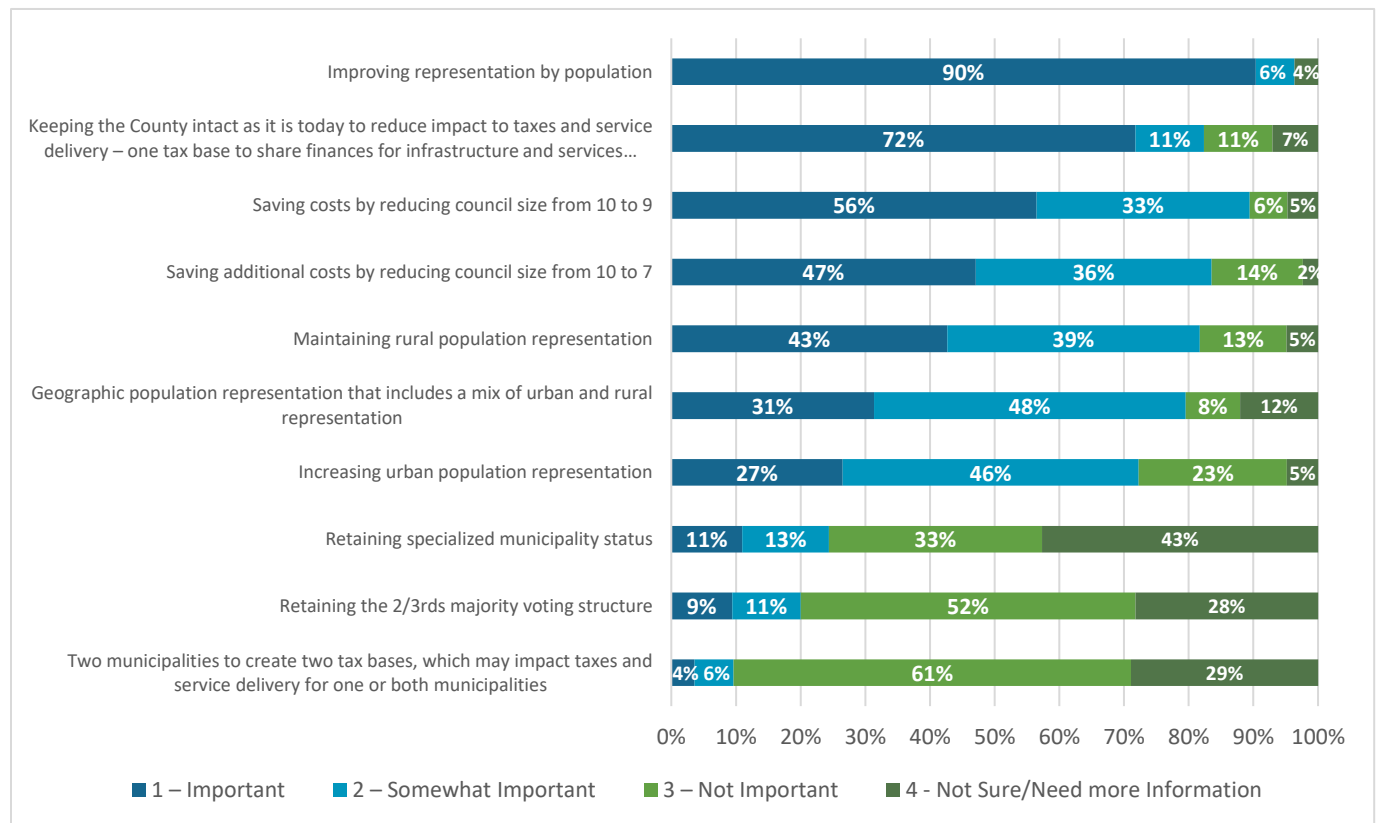
Observations on Least Preferred

- 84% selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 12% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 8% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 1% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?⁵

- 85 of the 150 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 65 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.10: Ward 2: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (82 respondents)

- Highest rank: 43% of respondents felt **unsure/needed more information**.

Improving representation by population (83 respondents)

- Highest rank: 90% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (82 respondents)

- Highest rank: 43% felt this was **important**.

⁵ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (83 respondents)

- Highest rank: 46% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (83 respondents)

- Highest rank: 48% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (85 respondents)

- Highest rank: 72% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (83 respondents)

- Highest rank: 61% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (85 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (85 respondents)

- Highest rank: 56% felt this was **important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (85 respondents)

- Highest rank: 47% felt this was **important**.

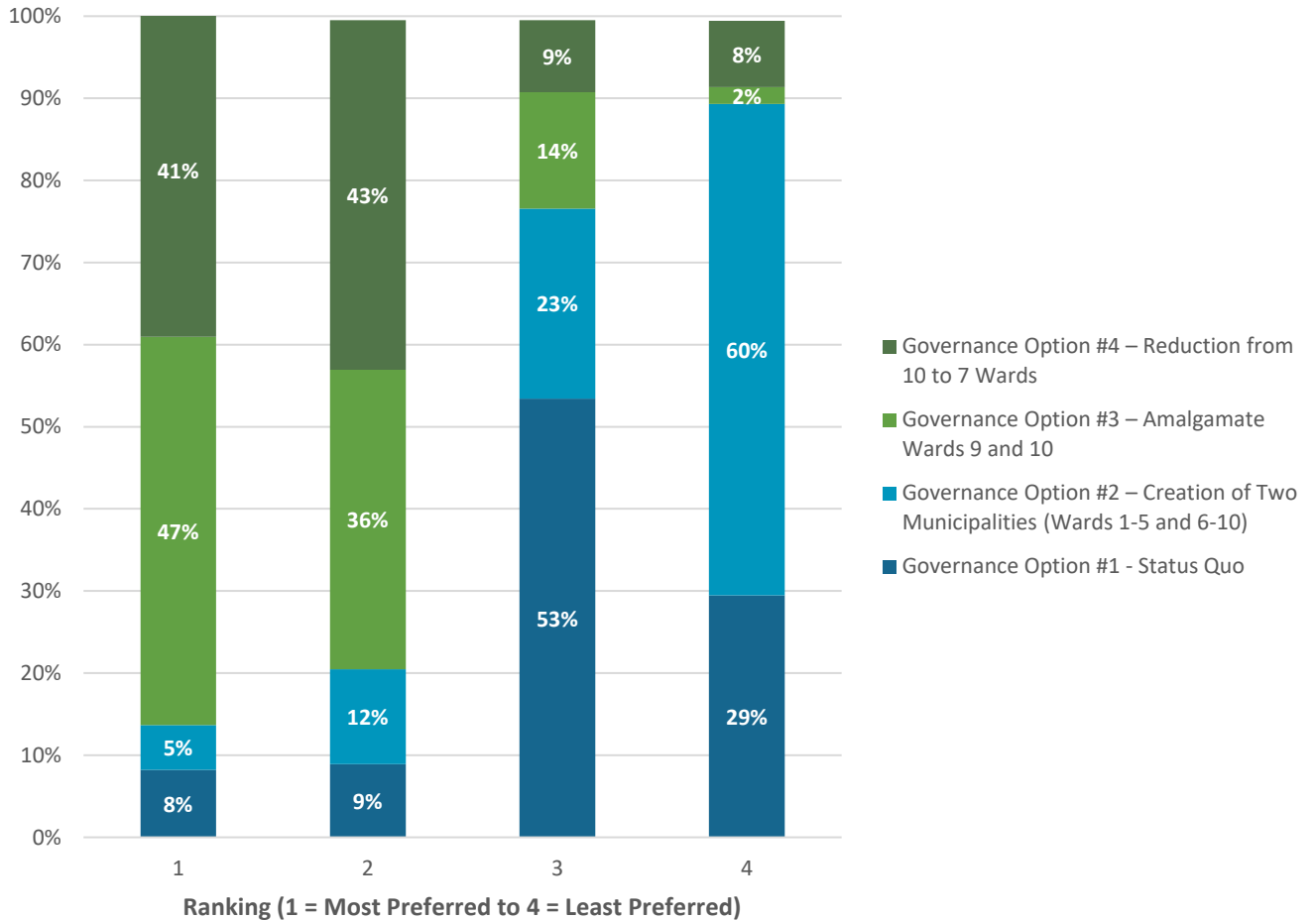
4.6.3 Ward 3 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 261 identified themselves as living within Ward 3. Two of these 261 respondents also identified themselves as also living within Ward 1. The reasons are unknown for the two respondents indicating two different wards. Such could be attributed to them being unsure of precisely which side of a ward boundary they reside or them having land holdings in more than one ward.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 148 of the 261 respondents answered this question. The other 113 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.11: Ward 3: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 47% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 41% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 8% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 5% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.

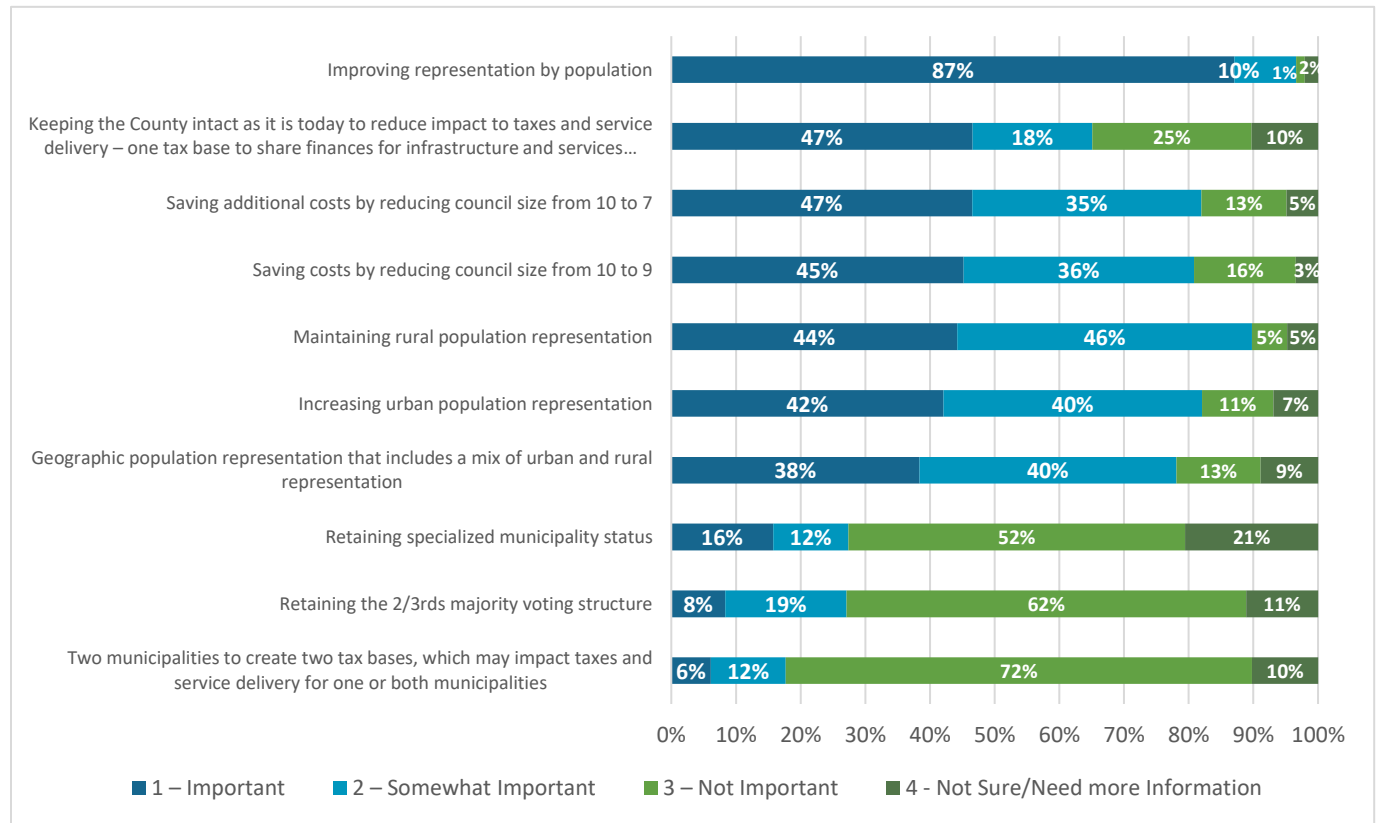
Observations on Least Preferred

- 60% selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 29% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 8% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 2% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?⁶

- 147 of the 260 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 113 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.12: Ward 3: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (146 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% of respondents felt **not important**.

Improving representation by population (147 respondents)

- Highest rank: 87% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (147 respondents)

- Highest rank: 46% felt this was **somewhat important**.

⁶ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (145 respondents)

- Highest rank: 42% felt this was **important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (146 respondents)

- Highest rank: 40% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (146 respondents)

- Highest rank: 47% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (147 respondents)

- Highest rank: 72% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (144 respondents)

- Highest rank: 62% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (146 respondents)

- Highest rank: 45% felt this was **important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (144 respondents)

- Highest rank: 47% felt this was **important**.

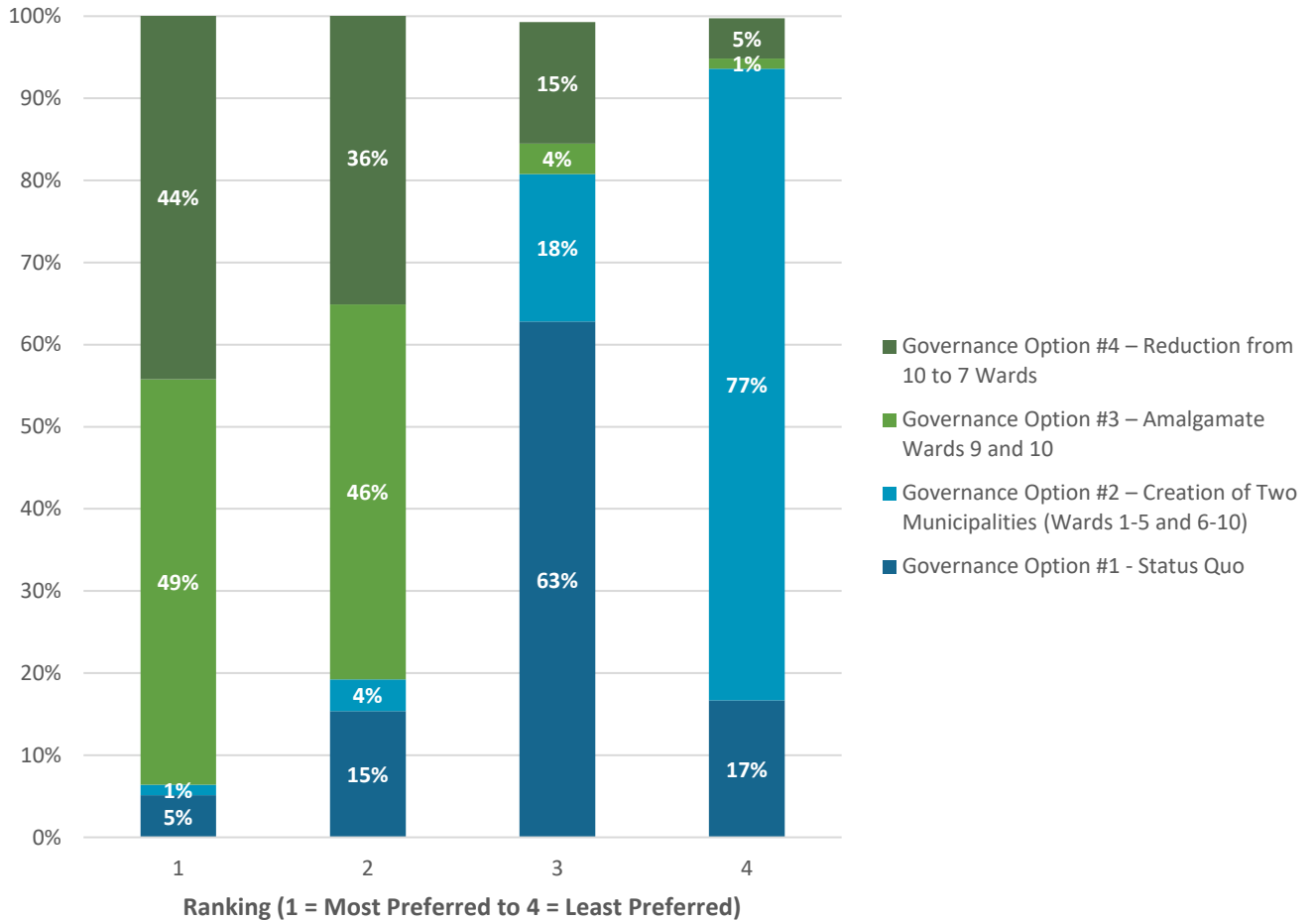
4.6.4 Ward 4 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 167 identified themselves as living within Ward 4.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 81 of the 167 respondents answered this question. The other 86 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.13: Ward 4: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 49% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 44% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 5% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 1% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.

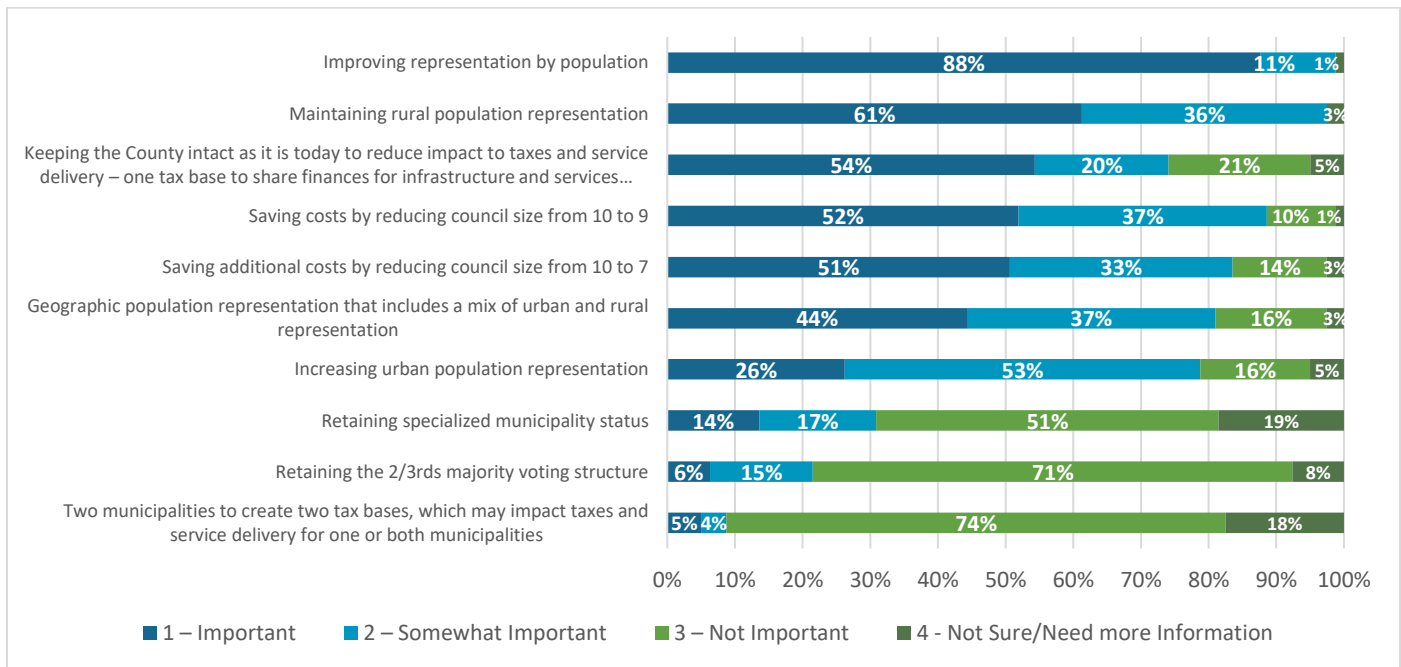
Observations on Least Preferred

- 77% selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 17% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 5% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 1% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?⁷

- 81 of the 167 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 86 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.14: Ward 4: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (81 respondents)

- Highest rank: 51% of respondents felt **not important**.

Improving representation by population (81 respondents)

- Highest rank: 88% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (80 respondents)

- Highest rank: 61% felt this was **important**.

Increasing urban population representation (80 respondents)

- Highest rank: 53% felt this was **somewhat important**.

⁷ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 44% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (81 respondents)

- Highest rank: 54% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (80 respondents)

- Highest rank: 74% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 71% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% felt this was **important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 51% felt this was **important**.

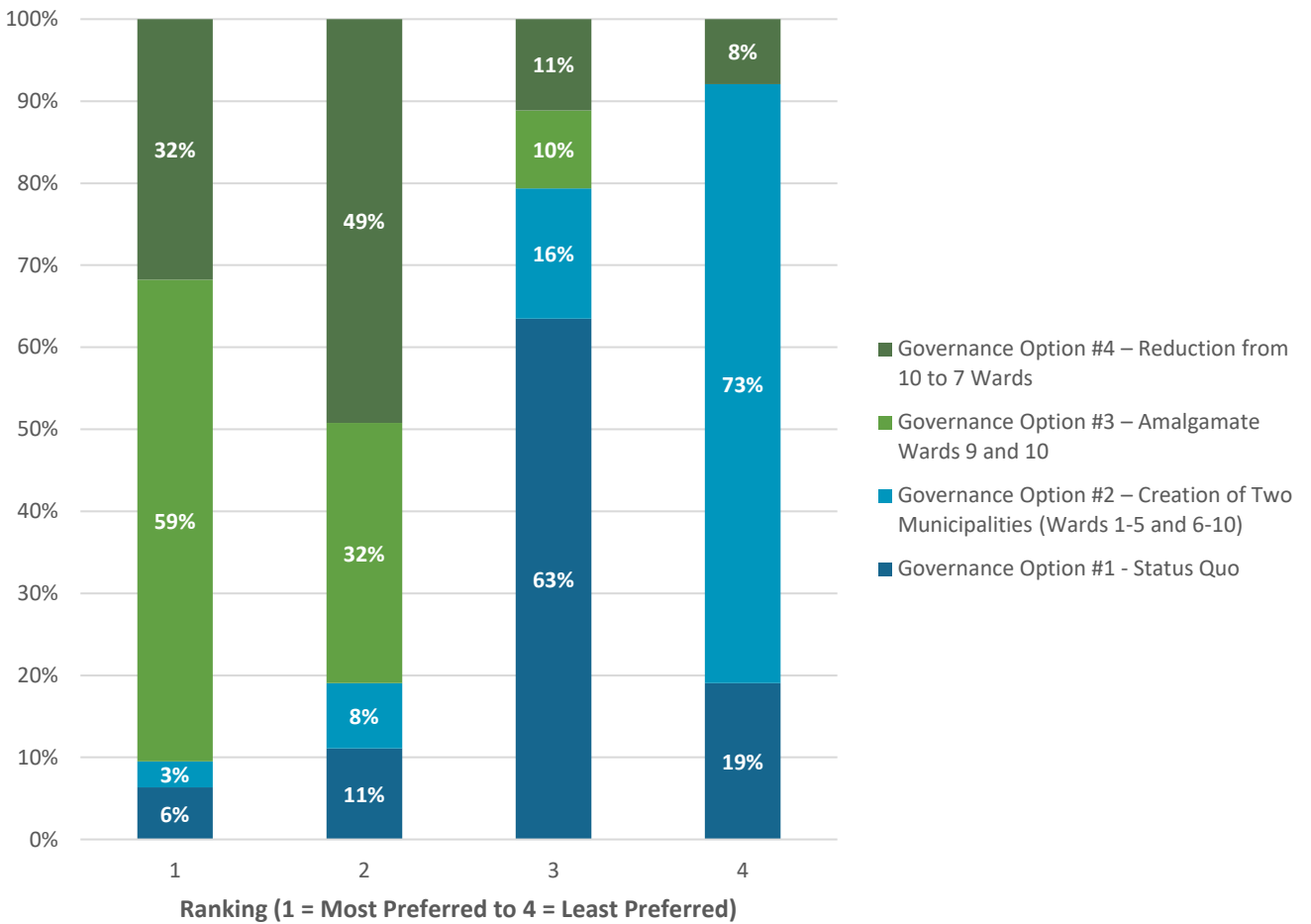
4.6.5 Ward 5 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 111 identified themselves as living within Ward 5.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 63 of the 111 respondents answered this question. The other 48 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.15: Ward 5: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 59% of the respondents selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 32% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 6% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 3% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.

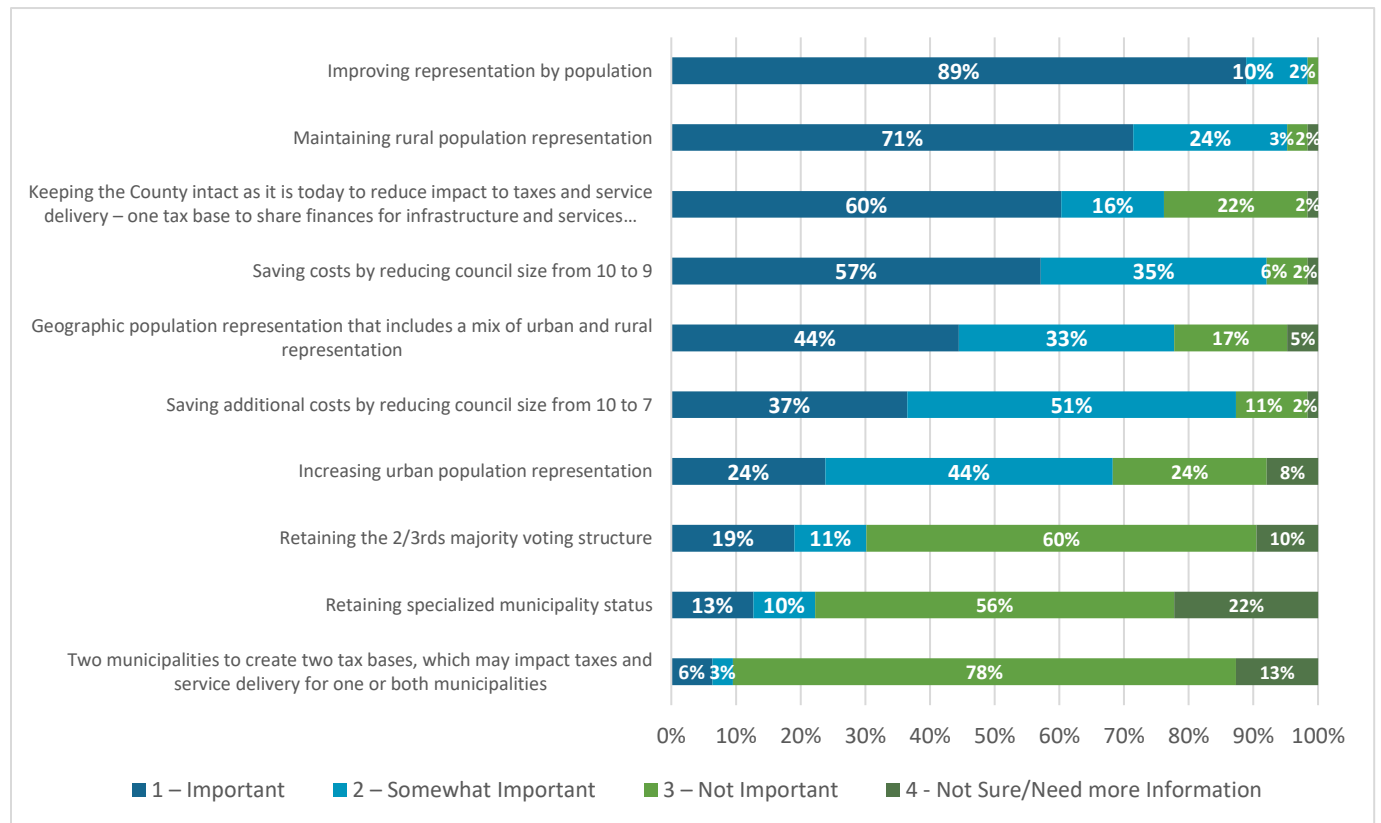
Observations on Least Preferred

- 73% selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 19% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 8% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?⁸

- 63 of the 111 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 48 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.16: Ward 5: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 56% of respondents felt **not important**.

Improving representation by population (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 89% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 71% felt this was **important**.

⁸ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 44% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (respondents)

- Highest rank: 44% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 60% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 78% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 60% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 57% felt this was **important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (63 respondents)

- Highest rank: 51% felt this was **somewhat important**.

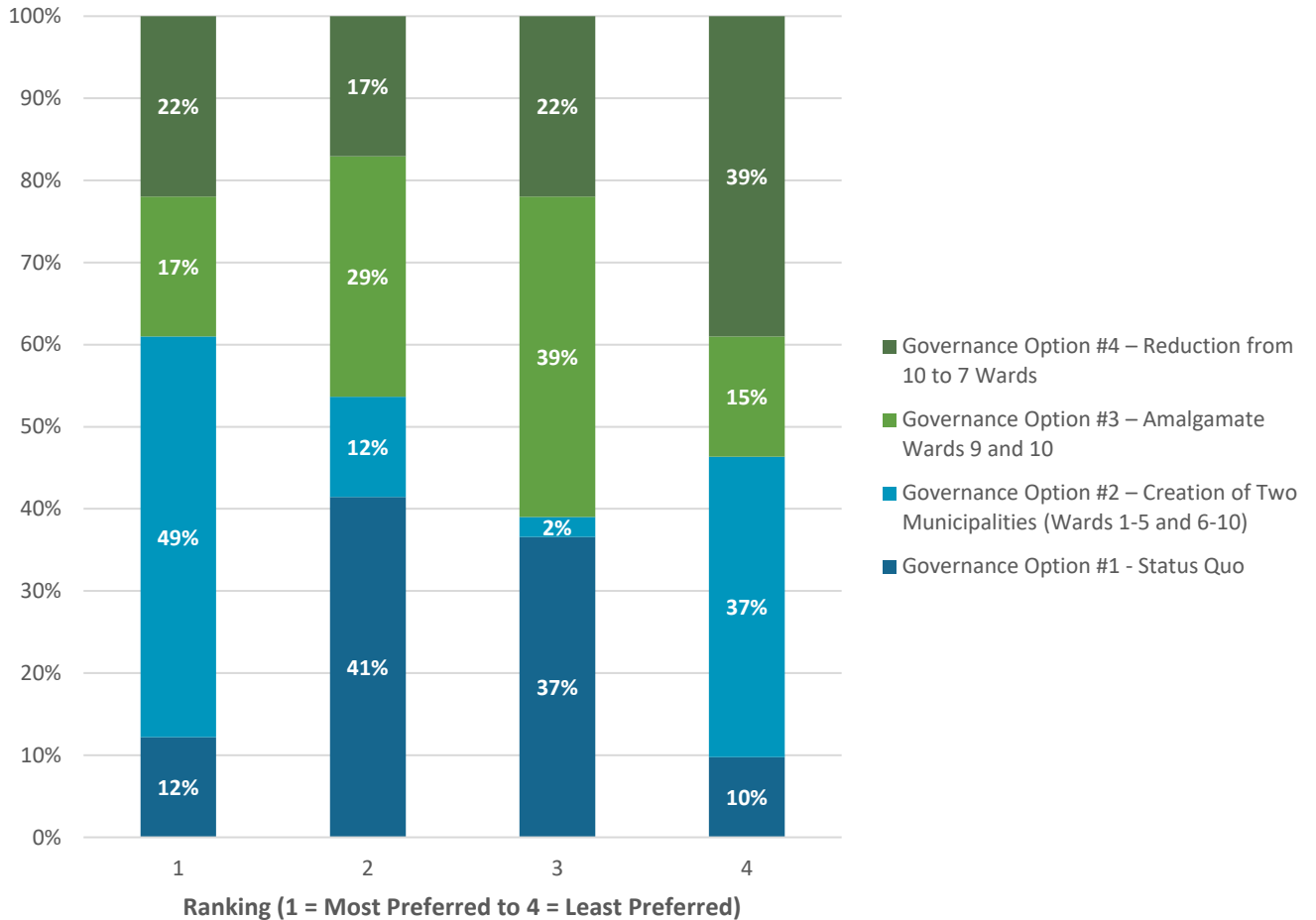
4.6.6 Ward 6 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 78 identified themselves as living within Ward 6.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 41 of the 78 respondents answered this question. The other 37 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.17: Ward 6: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 49% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 22% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 17% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 12% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo.

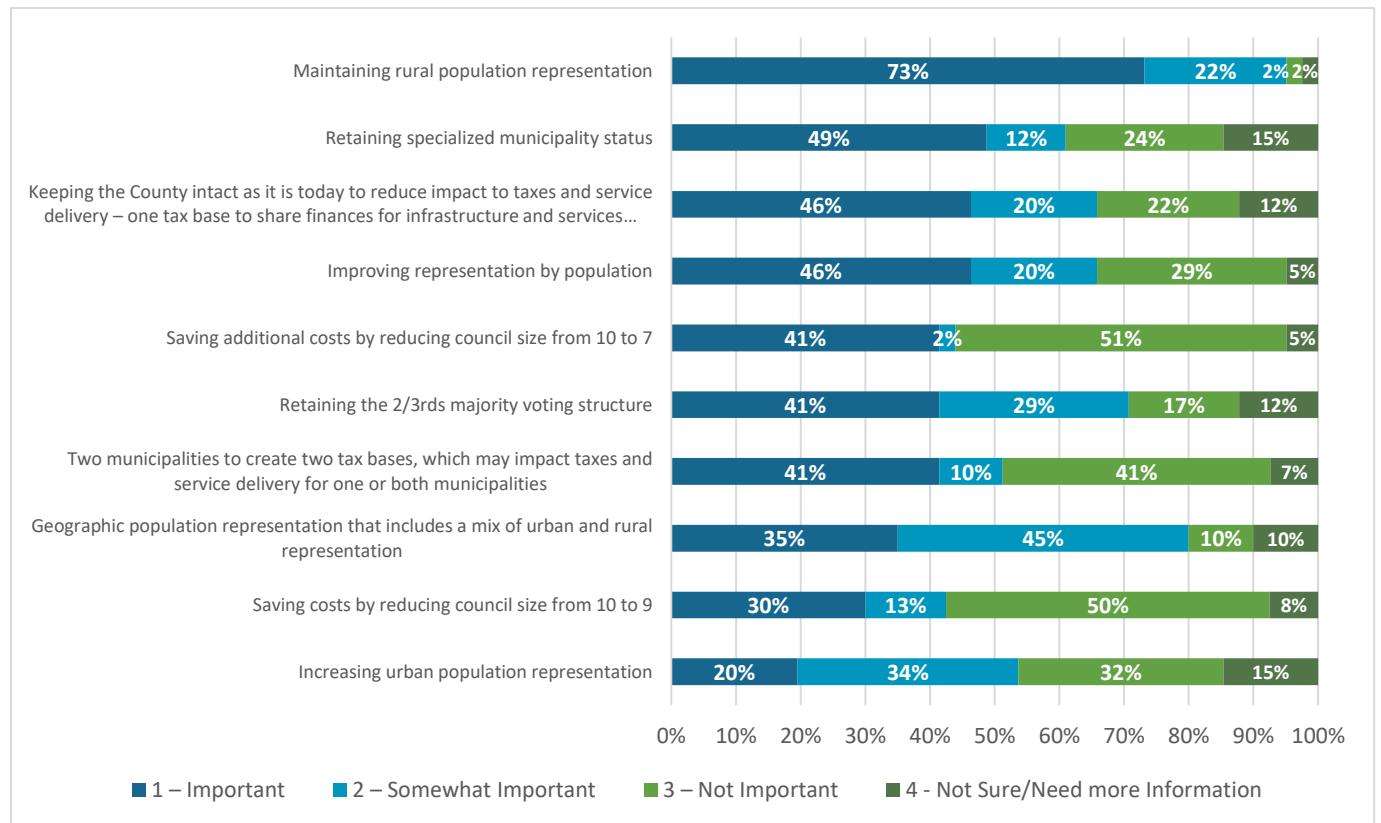
Observations on Least Preferred

- 39% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 37% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities;
 - 15% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 10% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?⁹

- 41 of the 78 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 37 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.18: Ward 6: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 49% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 46% felt this was **important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 73% felt this was **important**.

Increasing urban population representation (41 respondents)

⁹ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

- Highest rank: 34% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (40 respondents)

- Highest rank: 45% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 46% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 41% felt this was **important** while an equal 41.46% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 41% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (40 respondents)

- Highest rank: 50% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (41 respondents)

- Highest rank: 51% felt this was **not important**.

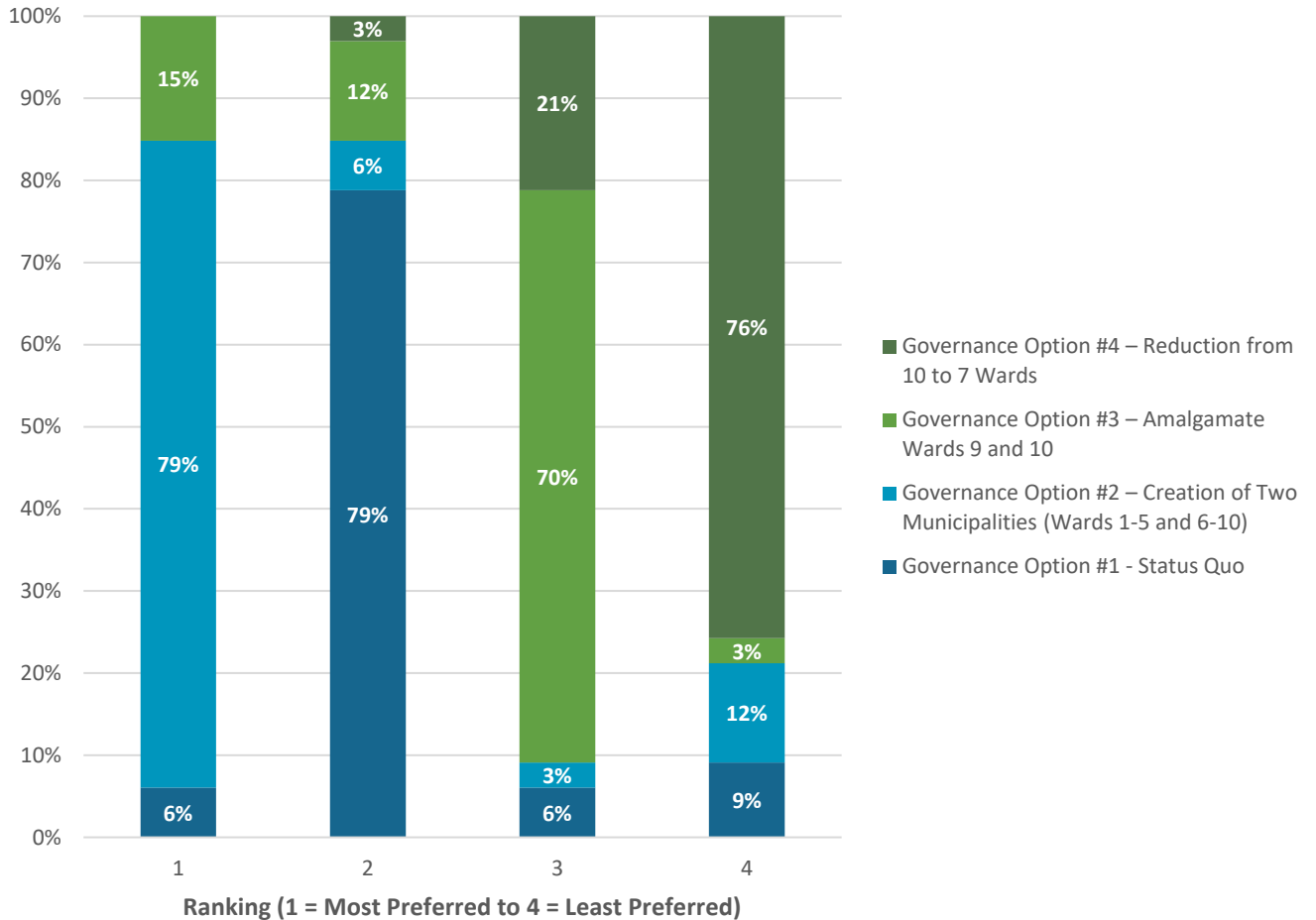
4.6.7 Ward 7 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 64 identified themselves as living within Ward 7. One of these 64 respondents also identified themselves as living within the Town of High Level. The reasons are unknown for the one respondent indicating two different locations. Such could be attributed to them having land holdings in both locations.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 33 of the 64 respondents answered this question. The other 31 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.19: Ward 7: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 79% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 15% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10;
 - 6% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

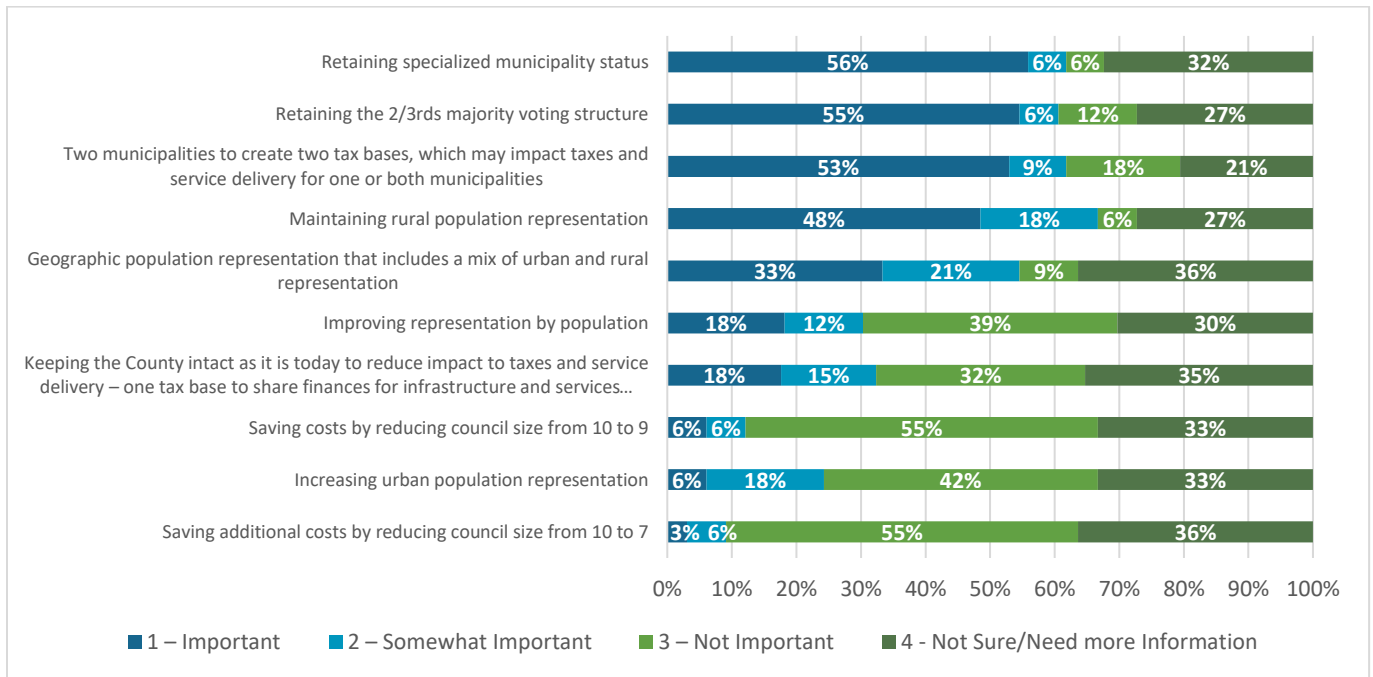
Observations on Least Preferred

- 76% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 12% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities;
 - 9% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 3% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹⁰

- 34 of the 64 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 30 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.20: Ward 7: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (34 respondents)

- Highest rank: 56% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 39% felt this was **not important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 48% felt this was **important**.

Increasing urban population representation (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 42% felt this was **not important**.

¹⁰ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 36% felt unsure/needed more information.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (34 respondents)

- Highest rank: 35% felt unsure/needed more information.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (34 respondents)

- Highest rank: 53% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 55% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 55% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (33 respondents)

- Highest rank: 55% felt this was **not important**.

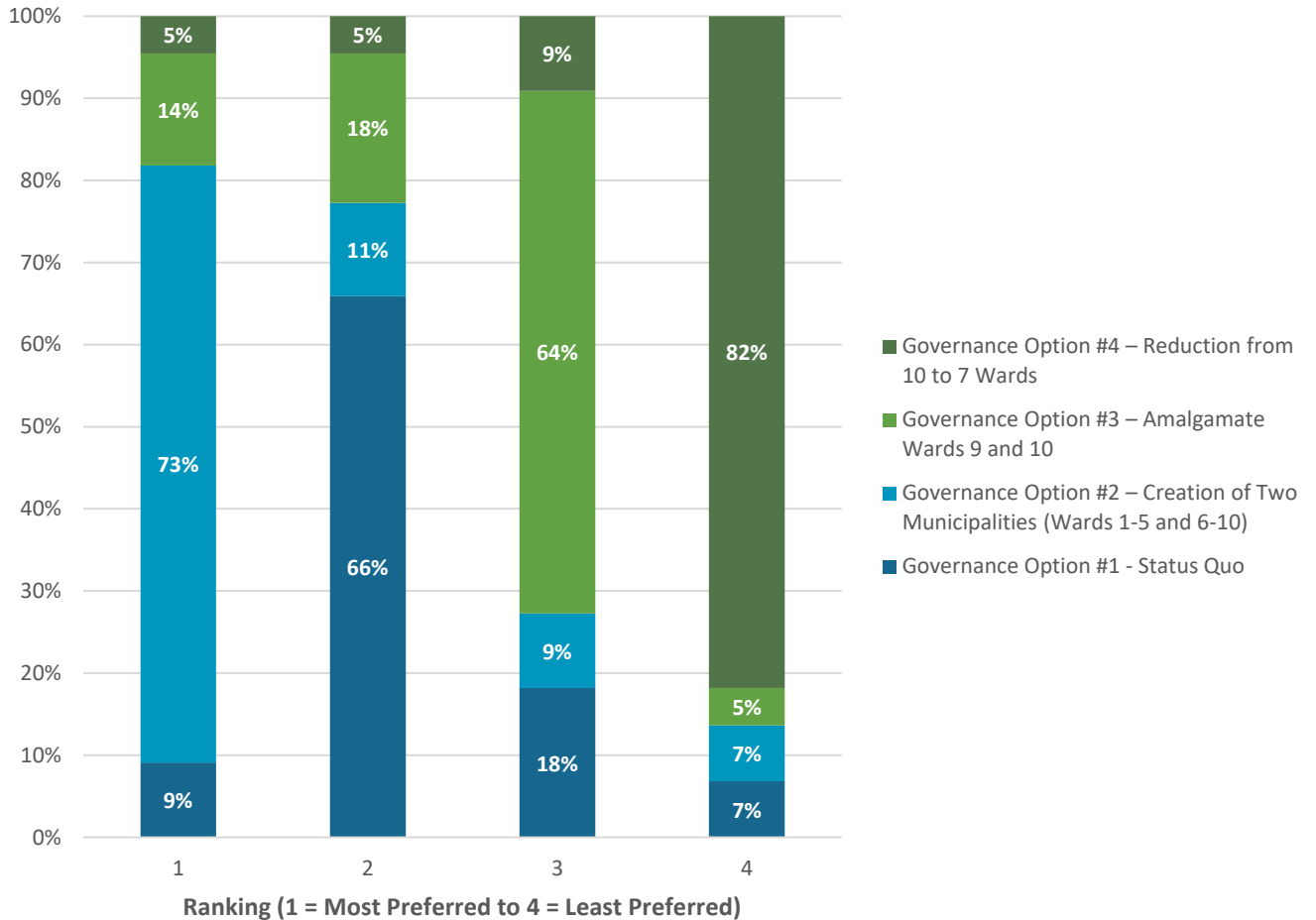
4.6.8 Ward 8 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 69 identified themselves as living within Ward 8.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 44 of the 69 respondents answered this question. The other 25 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.21: Ward 8: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 73% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 14% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10;
 - 9% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - 5% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

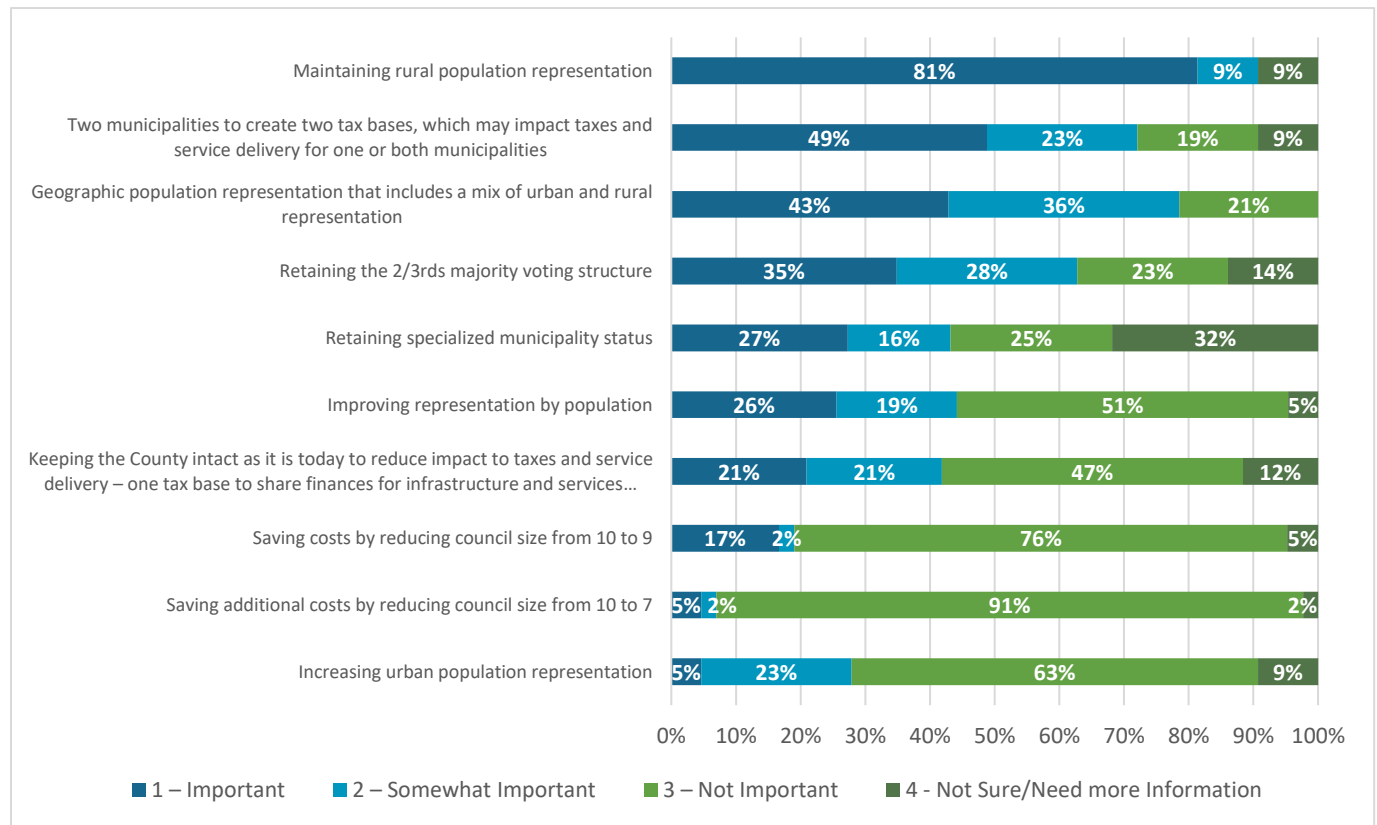
Observations on Least Preferred

- 82% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 7% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - an equal 7% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities; and
 - 5% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹¹

- 44 of the 69 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 25 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.22: Ward 8: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (44 respondents)

- Highest rank: 32% of respondents felt **unsure/needed more information**.

Improving representation by population (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 51% felt this was **not important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 81% felt this was **important**.

¹¹ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 63% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (42 respondents)

- Highest rank: 43% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 47% felt this was **not important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 49% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 35% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (42 respondents)

- Highest rank: 76% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (43 respondents)

- Highest rank: 91% felt this was **not important**.

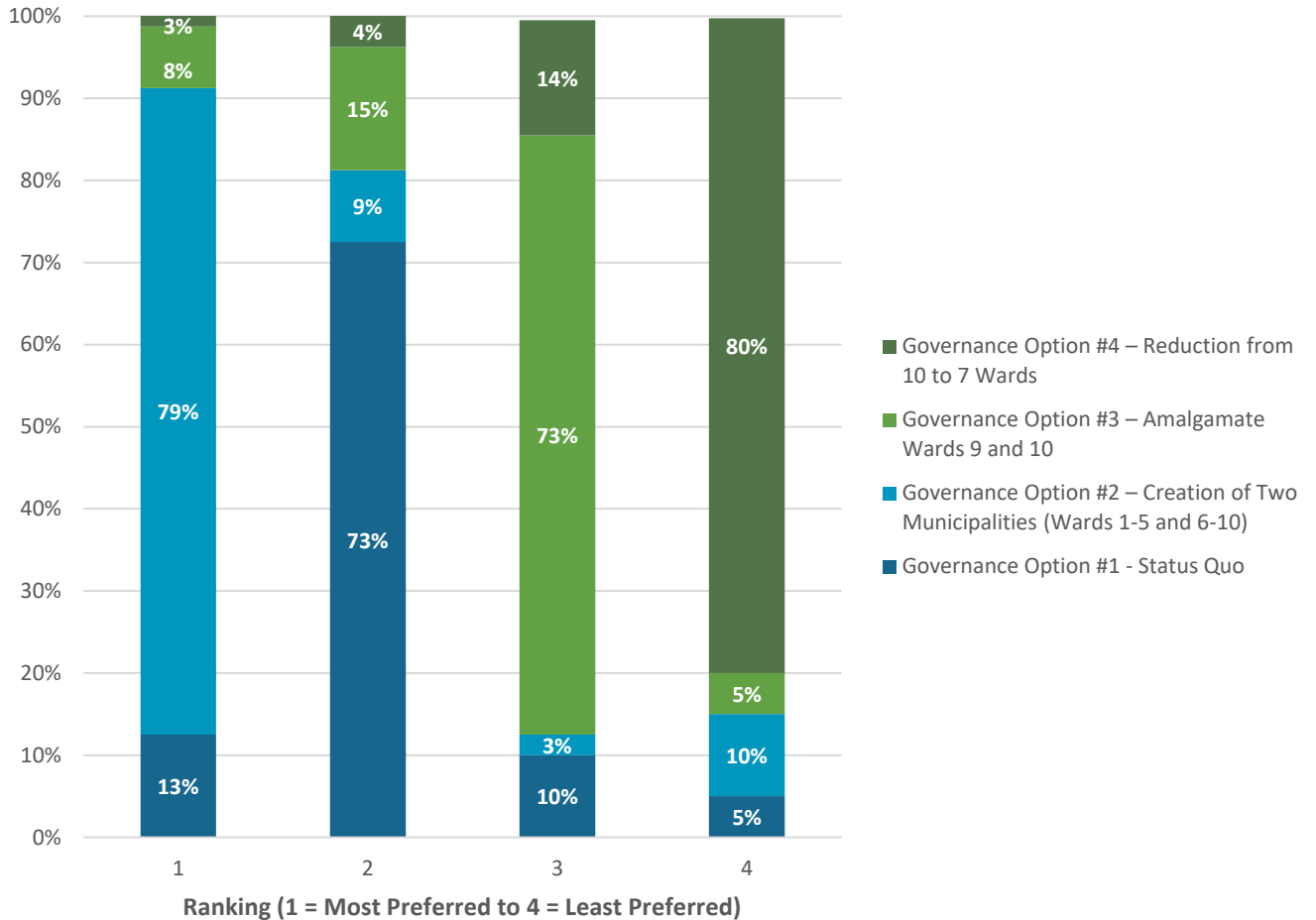
4.6.9 Ward 9 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 150 identified themselves as living within Ward 9.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 80 of the 150 respondents answered this question. The other 70 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.23: Ward 9: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 79% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 13% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 8% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 3% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

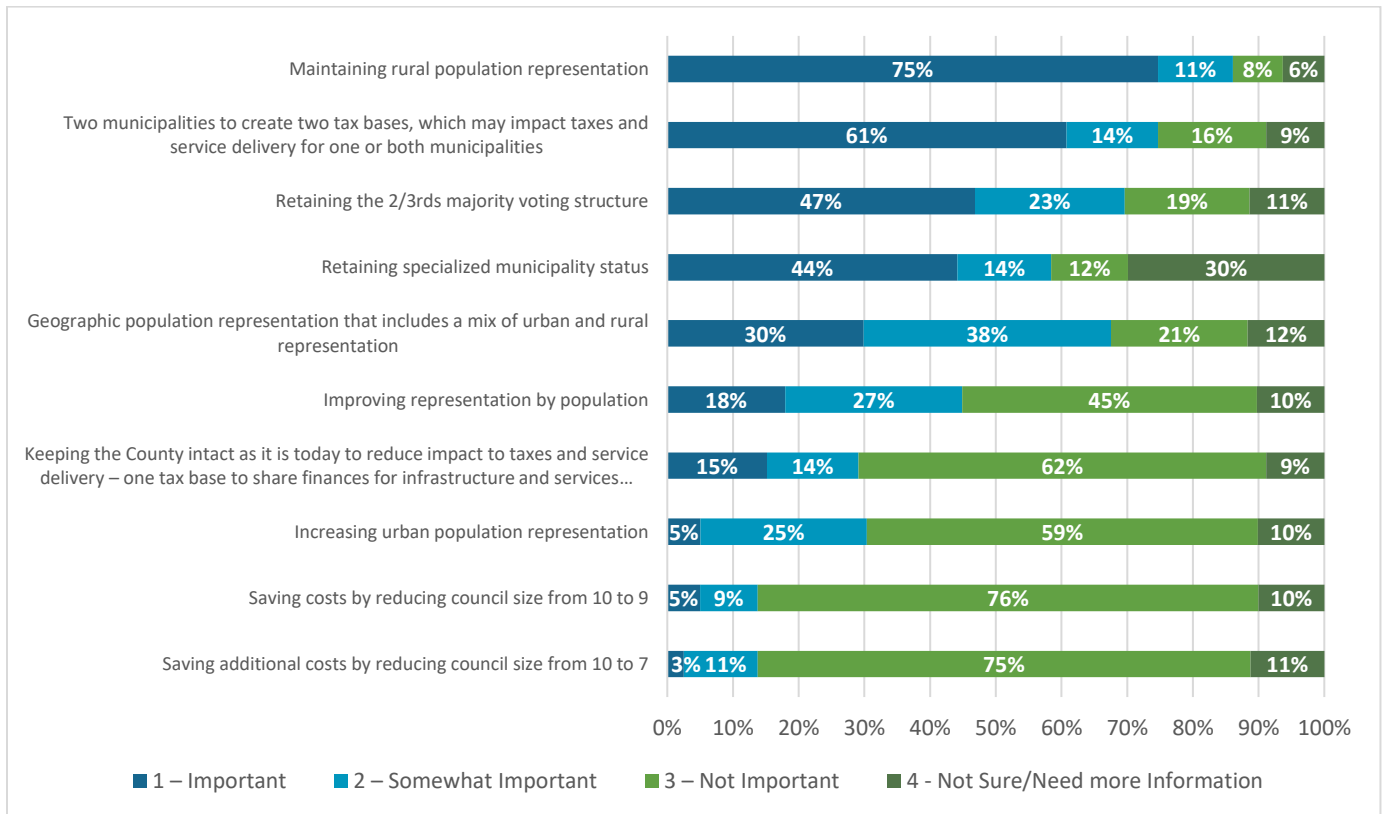
Observations on Least Preferred

- 80% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 10% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities;
 - 5% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo; and
 - an equal 5% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹²

- 80 of the 150 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 70 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.24: Ward 9: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (77 respondents)

- Highest rank: 44% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (78 respondents)

- Highest rank: 45% felt this was **not important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 75% felt this was **important**.

¹² Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 59% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (77 respondents)

- Highest rank: 38% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 62% felt this was **not important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 61% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (79 respondents)

- Highest rank: 47% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (80 respondents)

- Highest rank: 76% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (80 respondents)

- Highest rank: 75% felt this was **not important**.

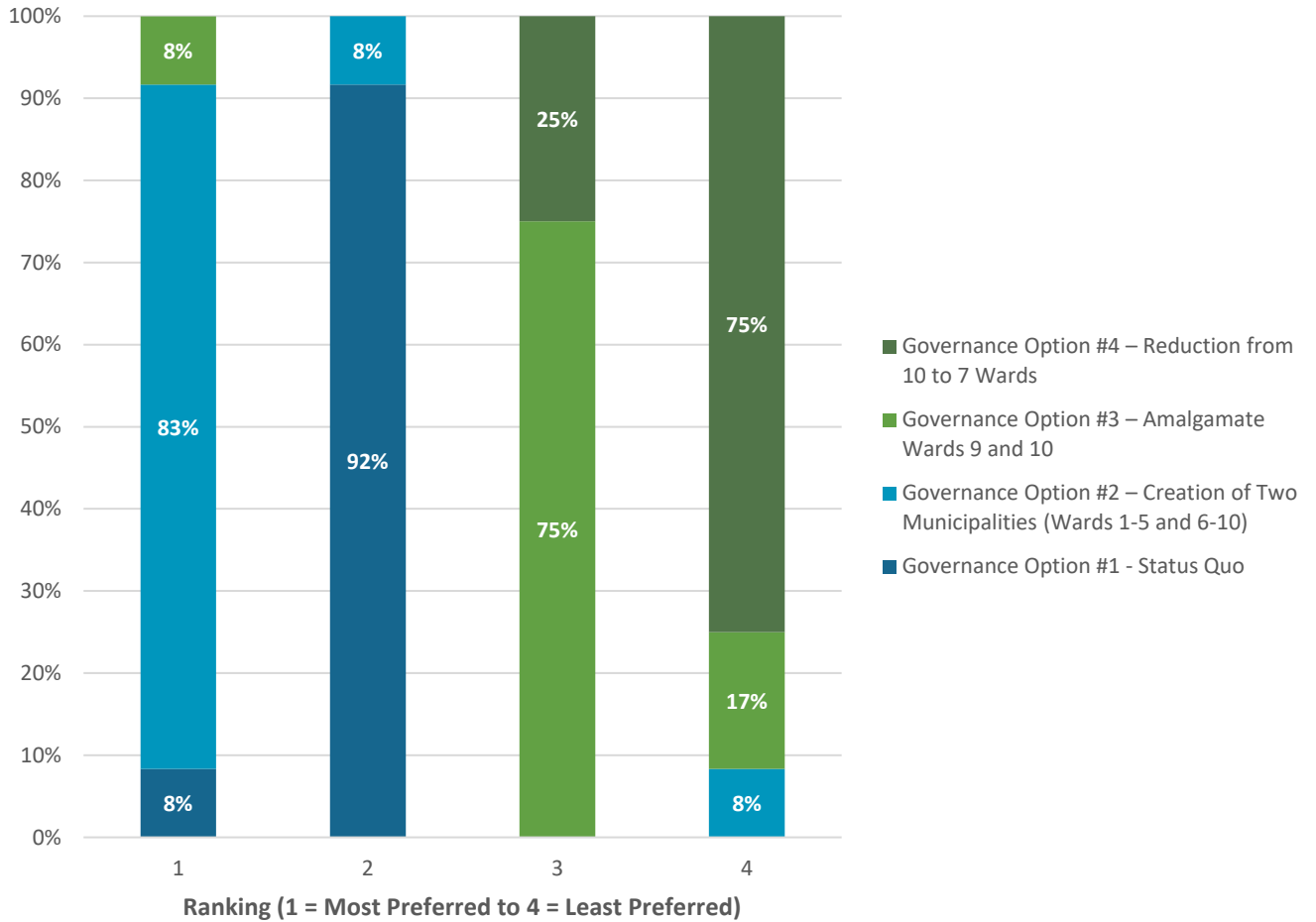
4.6.10 Ward 10 Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 18 identified themselves as living within Ward 10. Two of these 18 respondents also identified themselves as living within the Town of High Level. The reasons are unknown for the two respondents indicating two different locations. Such could be attributed to them having land holdings in both locations or being a permanent resident in one location and a non-permanent resident in the other location.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 12 of the 18 respondents answered this question. The other 6 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.25: Ward 10: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 83% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 8% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - an equal 8% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

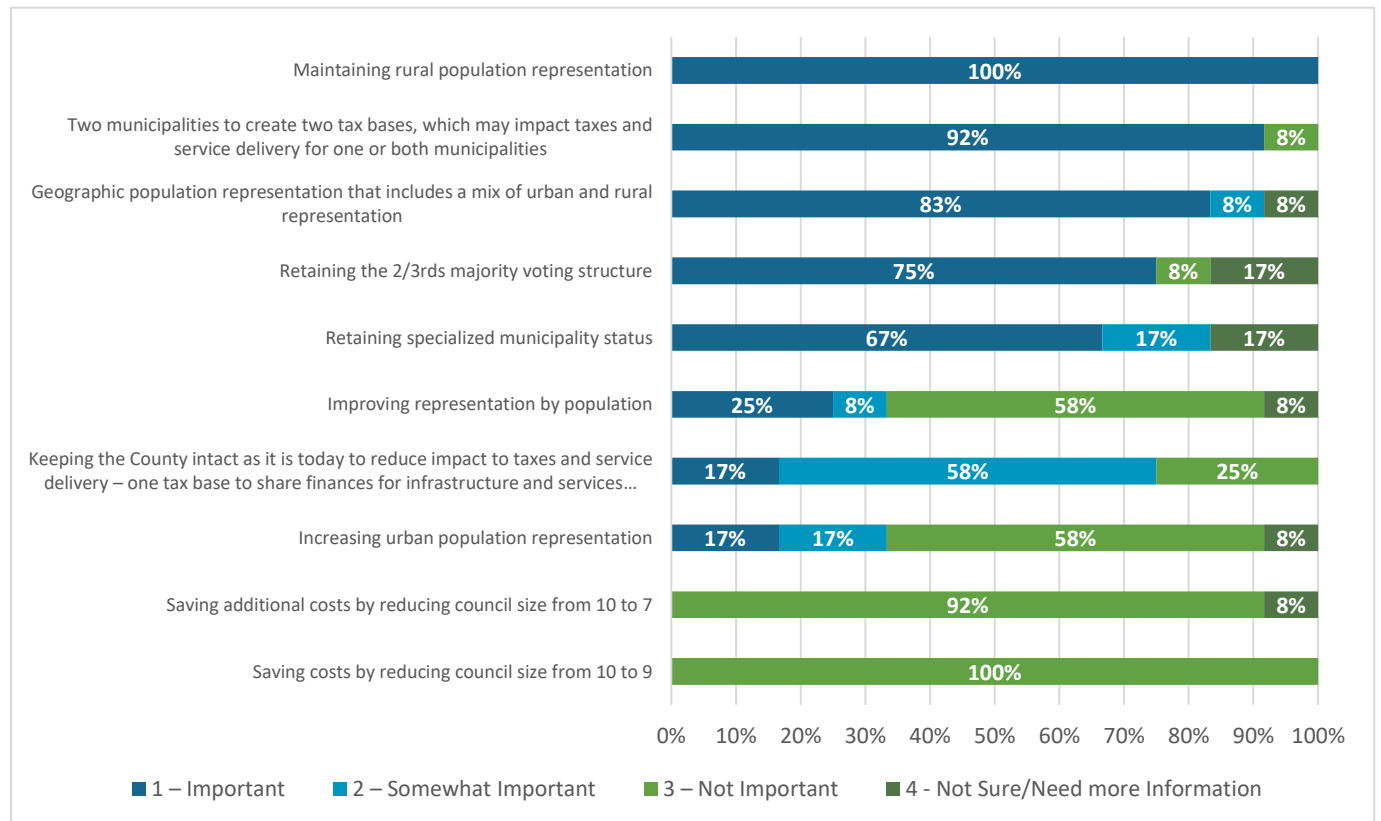
Observations on Least Preferred

- 75% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 17 for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10;
 - 8% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹³

- 12 of the 18 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 16 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.26: Ward 10: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 67% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 58% felt this was **not important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 100% felt this was **important**.

¹³ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 58% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 83% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 58% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 92% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 75% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 100% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 92% felt this was **not important**.

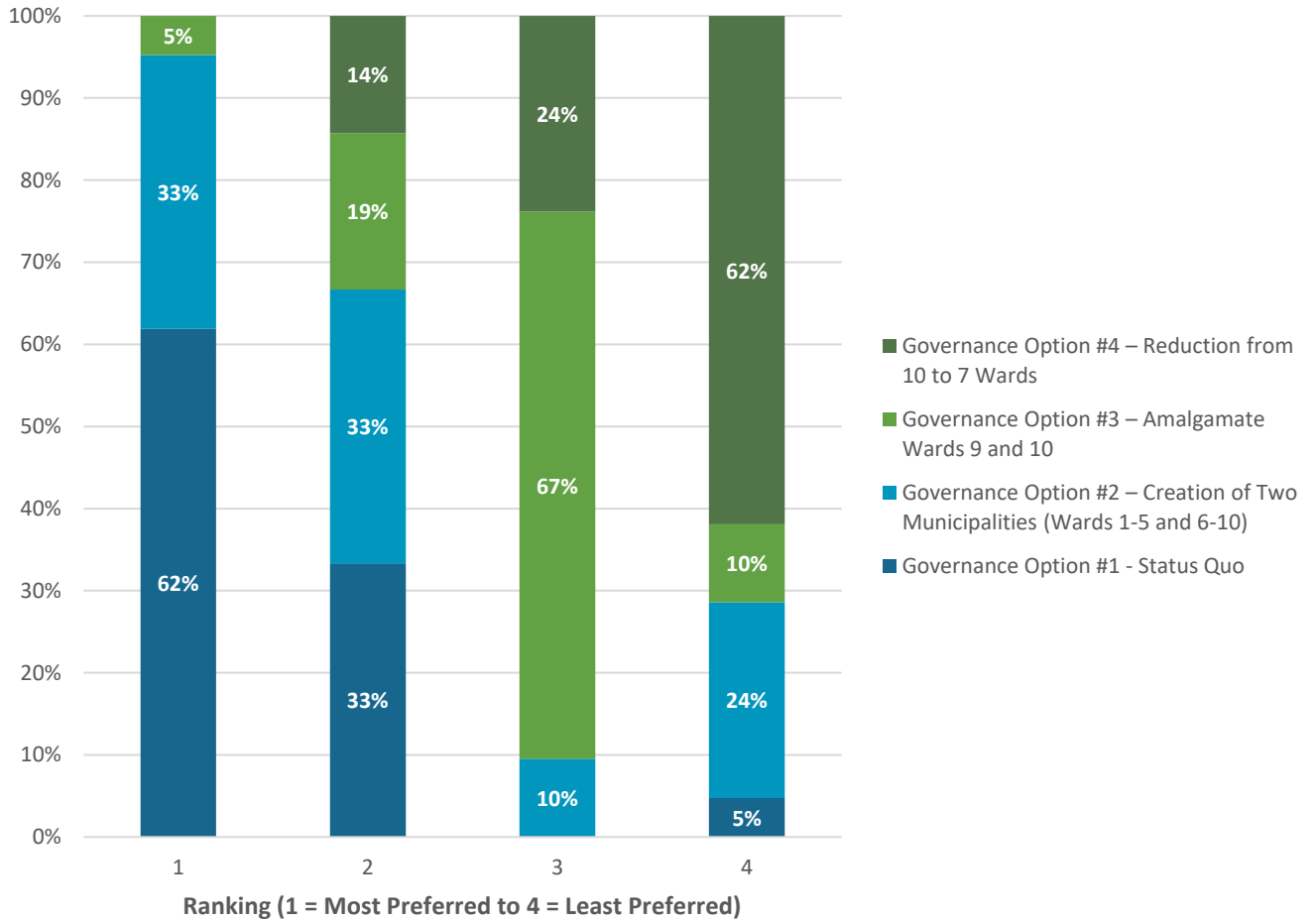
4.6.11 Rainbow Lake Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 38 identified themselves as living within the Town of Rainbow Lake.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 21 of the 38 respondents answered this question. The other 17 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.27: Town of Rainbow Lake: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 62% of the respondents selected Governance Option #1: Status Quo followed by:
 - 33% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities;
 - 5% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

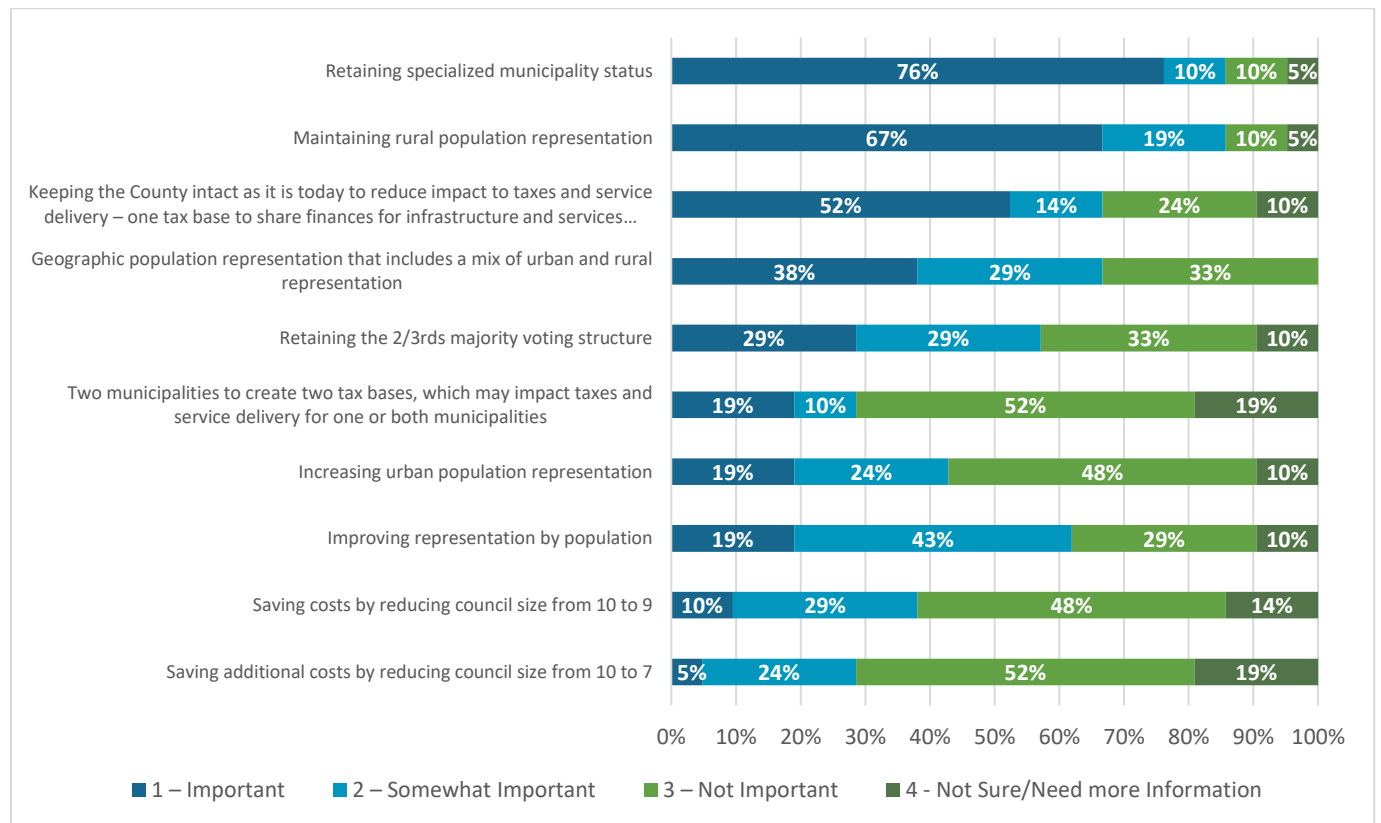
Observations on Least Preferred

- 62% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 24% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities;
 - 10% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - 5% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹⁴

- 21 of the 38 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 17 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.28: Town of Rainbow Lake: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 76% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 43% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 67% felt this was **important**.

¹⁴ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 48% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 38% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% felt this was **important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% felt this was **not important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 33% felt this was **not important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 48% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (21 respondents)

- Highest rank: 52% felt this was **not important**.

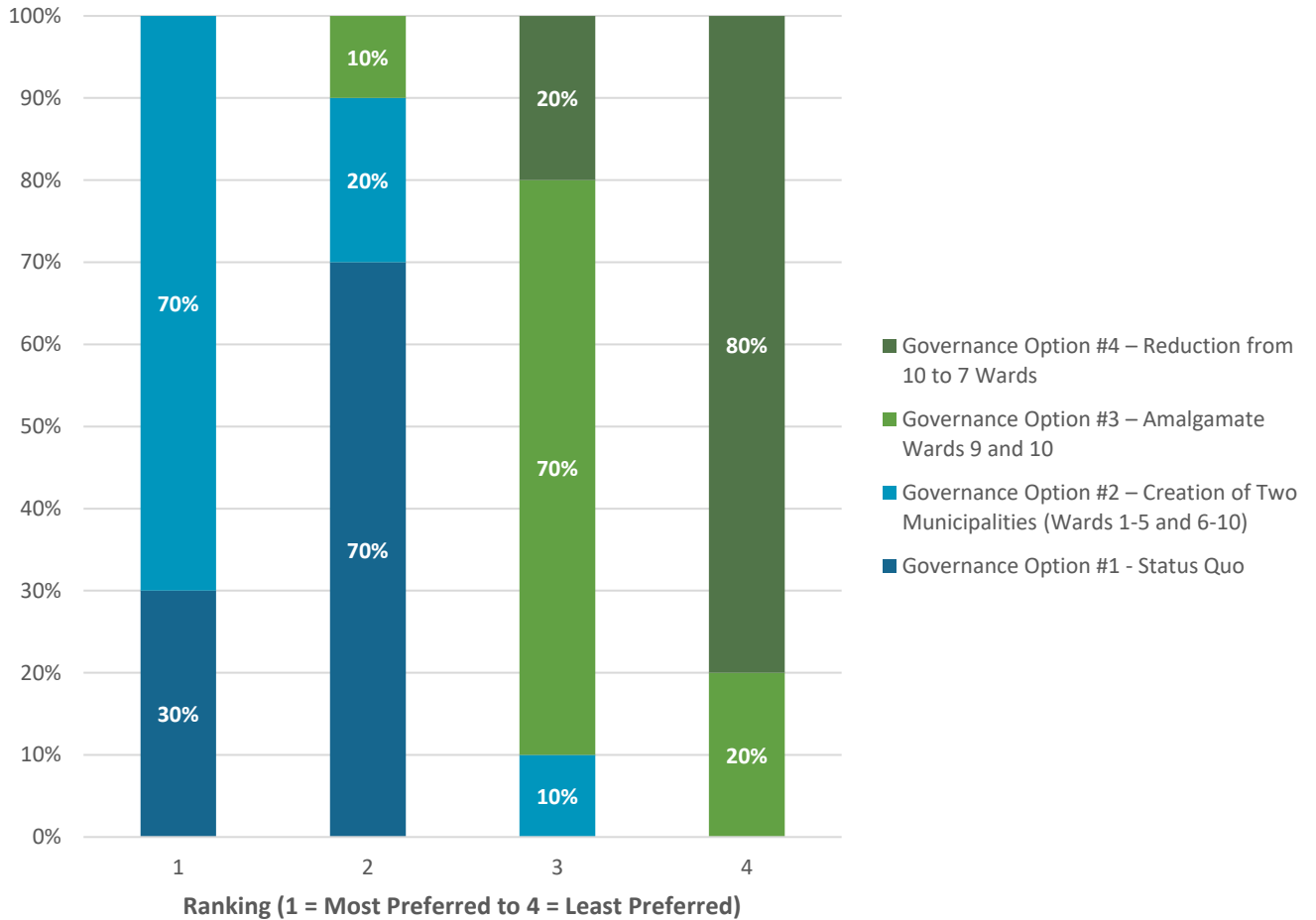
4.6.12 High Level Resident Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 24 identified themselves as living within the Town of High Level. Two of these 24 respondents also identified themselves as living within Ward 10 while one indicated they also lived in Ward 9. The reasons are unknown for the three respondents indicating two different locations. Such could be attributed to them having land holdings in both locations or being a permanent resident in one location and a non-permanent resident in the other location.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 10 of the 24 respondents answered this question. The other 14 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.29: Town of High Level: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 70% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 30% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 0% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10; and
 - an equal 0% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards.

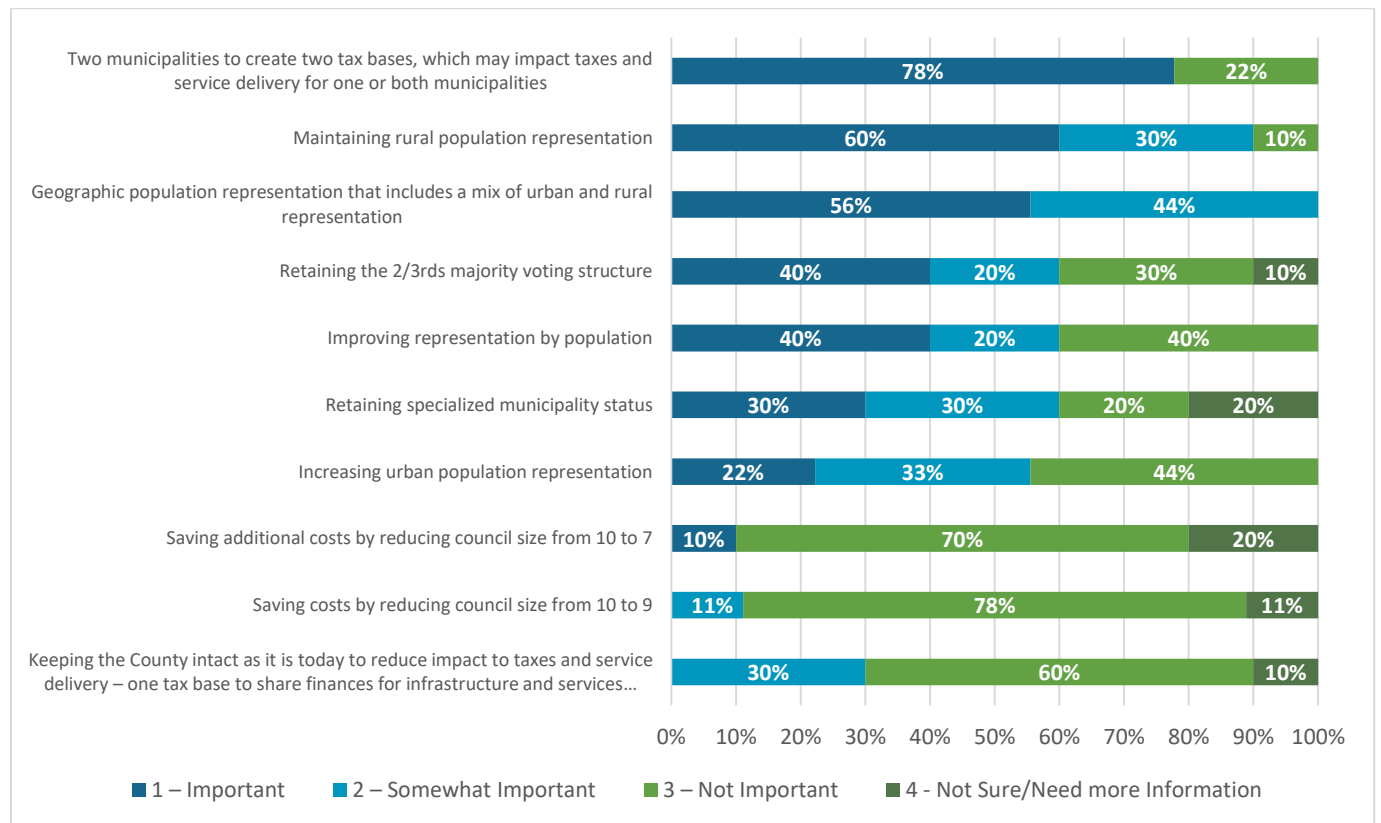
Observations on Least Preferred

- 70% selected Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10 followed by:
 - 20% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards;
 - 10% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹⁵

- 10 of the 24 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 14 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.30: Town of High Level: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 30% of respondents felt this was **important** while another 30.00% felt this was **somewhat important**.

Improving representation by population (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 40% of respondents felt this was **important** while another 40.00% felt this was **not important**.

¹⁵ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Maintaining rural population representation (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 60% felt this was **important**.

Increasing urban population representation (9 respondents)

- Highest rank: 44% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (9 respondents)

- Highest rank: 56% felt this was **important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 60% felt this was **not important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (9 respondents)

- Highest rank: 78% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 40% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (9 respondents)

- Highest rank: 78% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (10 respondents)

- Highest rank: 70% felt this was **not important**.

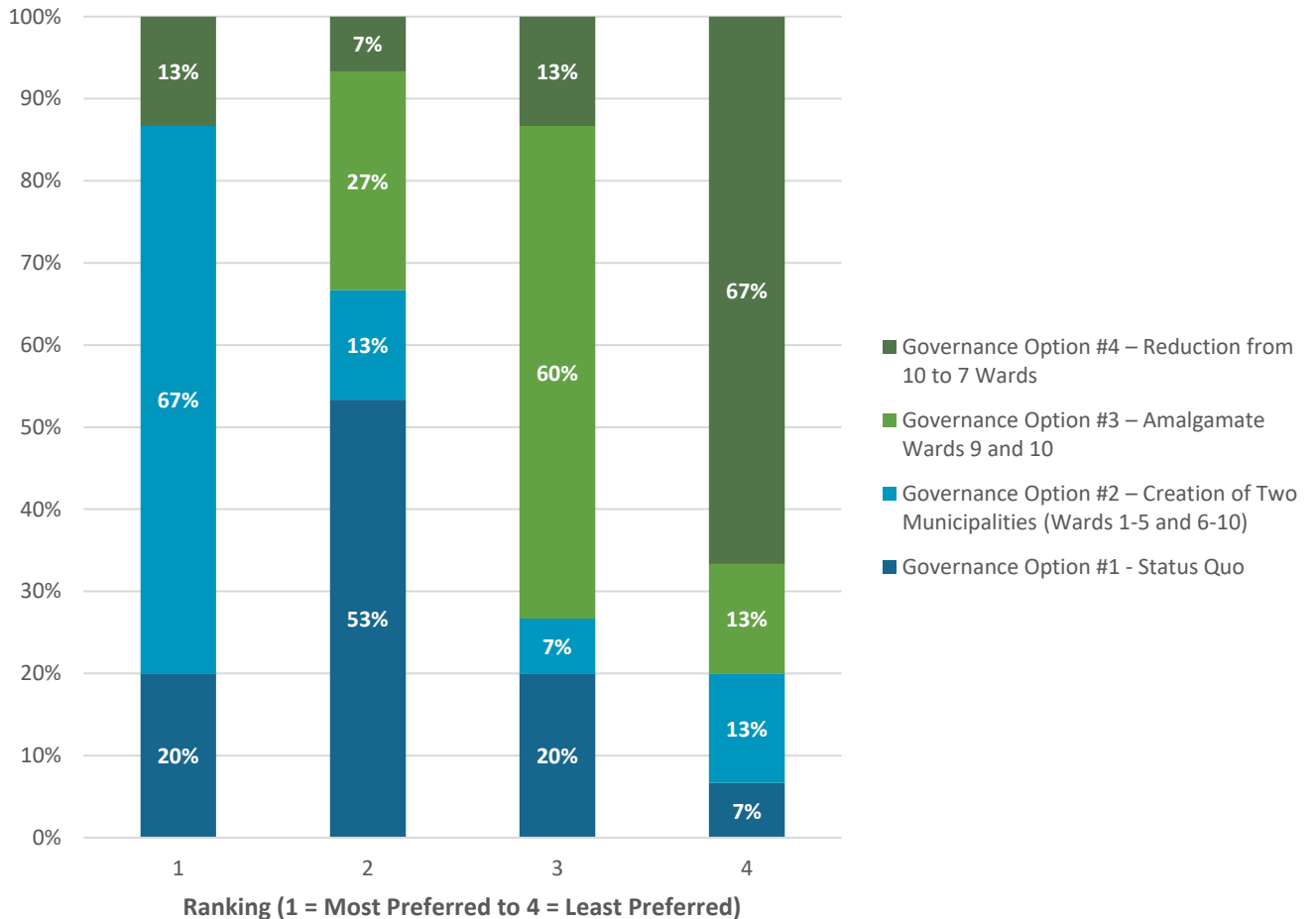
4.6.13 First Nation Resident and Other Survey Response Highlights

Of the 674 total respondents, 7 identified themselves as being part of a local First Nation and 13 indicated they lived beyond Mackenzie County.

Question 3: Please rank the following options from most preferred to least preferred for Mackenzie County (with 1 being most preferred and 4 being least preferred).

- 13 of the 20 respondents answered this question. The other 7 respondents skipped this question.

Table 4.31: First Nations Resident and Other Survey Responses: Overview of preferences for all four governance options.



Observations on Most Preferred

- 67% of the respondents selected Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities followed by:
 - 20% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo;
 - 13% for Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards; and
 - 0% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.

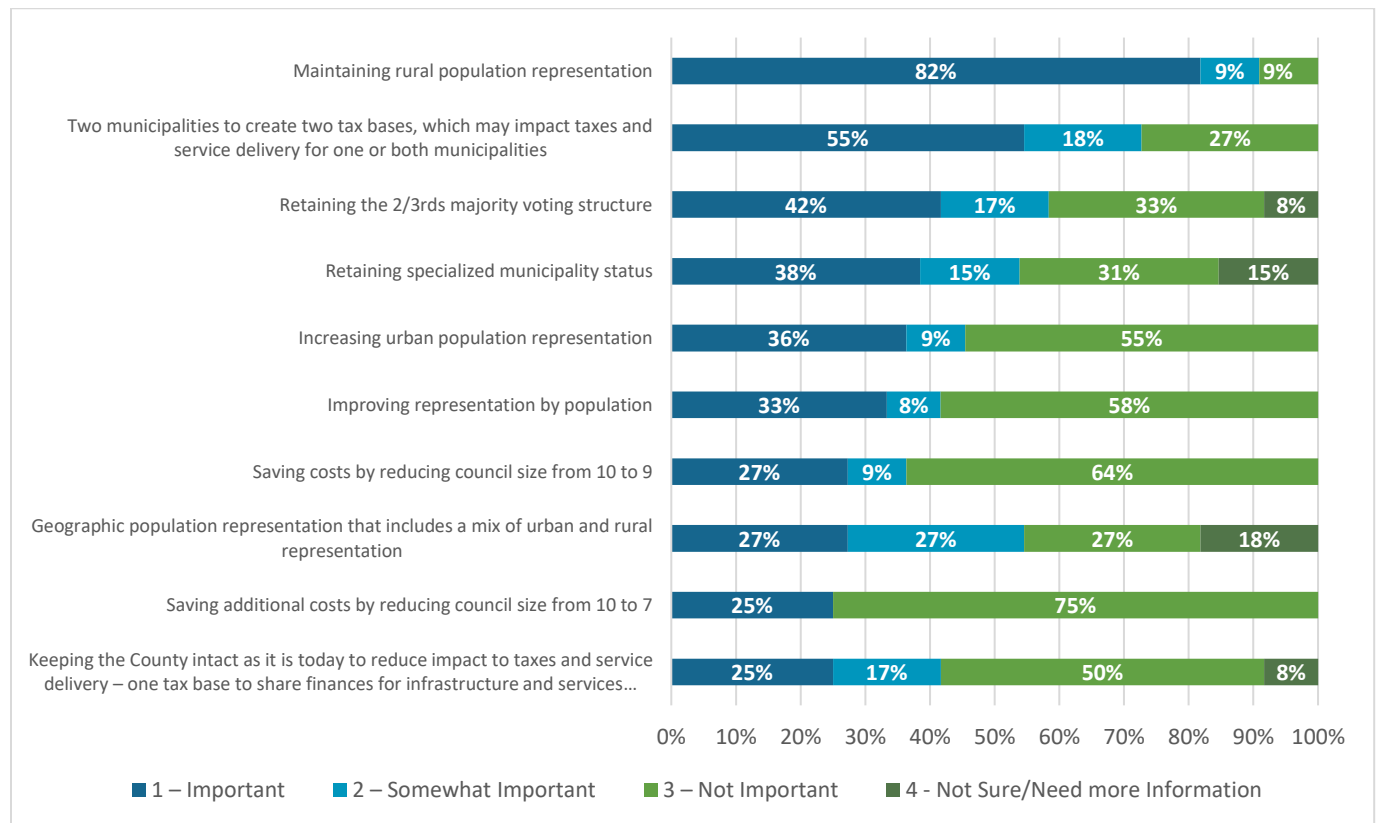
Observations on Least Preferred

- 67% selected Governance Option #4: Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards followed by:
 - 13% for Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10;
 - an equal 13% for Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities; and
 - 7% for Governance Option #1: Status Quo

Question 5: How important are the following items in relation to governance options for Mackenzie County?¹⁶

- 13 of the 20 respondents answered all or most of this question. The other 7 respondents skipped this question entirely.
- 10 different items were ranked by respondents as being important, somewhat important, not important, or not sure/need more information.

Table 4.32: First Nations Resident and Other Survey Responses: Level of importance for items relating to governance options for Mackenzie County.



Retaining specialized municipality status (13 respondents)

- Highest rank: 35% of respondents felt this was **important**.

Improving representation by population (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 58% felt this was **not important**.

Maintaining rural population representation (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 82% felt this was **important**.

¹⁶ Text captions cut off in table: Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

Increasing urban population representation (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 55% felt this was **not important**.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 27% felt this was **important** while another 27% felt this was **somewhat important** and another 27% felt this was **not important**.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 50% felt this was **not important**.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 55% felt this was **important**.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 42% felt this was **important**.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9 (11 respondents)

- Highest rank: 64% felt this was **not important**.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7 (12 respondents)

- Highest rank: 75% felt this was **not important**.

4.7 Observations from Key Highlights by Geographic Location

The analysis in **Section 4.5** reveals there are differing preferences among the survey responses across Mackenzie County's vast geography as it relates to future governance.

4.7.1 Governance Options

- The survey respondents from Wards 1 through 5 most preferred Governance Option #3: Amalgamate Wards 9 and 10.
- The survey respondents from Wards 6 through 10 most preferred Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.
- The survey respondents from Rainbow Lake most preferred Governance Option #1: Status Quo.
- The survey respondents from High Level, First Nations, and other locations beyond Mackenzie County most preferred Governance Option #2: Creation of Two Municipalities.

4.7.2 Items in Relation to Governance Options

Retaining specialized municipality status

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 6, 7, 9, 10, and Rainbow Lake as well as First Nations and other locations beyond the County.

- For High Level, this governance aspect had a tie rank of important and somewhat important.

Improving representation by population

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 1 through 6.
- For High Level, this governance aspect had a tie rank of important and not important.

Maintaining rural population representation

- There was nearly unanimous consensus on this governance aspect.
- It ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 1 and 2, Wards 4 through 10, Rainbow Lake, and High Level as well as First Nations and other locations beyond the County.

Increasing urban population representation

- Ward 4 ranked this governance aspect highest of importance among survey respondents.

Geographic population representation that includes a mix of urban and rural representation

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 4, 5, 8, 10, Rainbow Lake, and High Level.
- For First Nations and other locations beyond the County, this governance aspect had a three-way tie rank of important, somewhat important, and not important.

Keeping the County intact as it is today to reduce impact to taxes and service delivery – one tax base to share finances for infrastructure and services across the County

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 1 through 6 and Rainbow Lake.

Two municipalities to create two tax bases, which may impact taxes and service delivery for one or both municipalities

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 7 through 10 and High Level as well as First Nations and other locations beyond the County.
- For Ward 6, this governance aspect had a tie rank of important and not important.

Retaining the 2/3rds majority voting structure

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 6 through 10 and High Level as well as First Nations and other locations beyond the County.

Saving costs by reducing council size from 10 to 9

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 1 through 5.

Saving additional costs by reducing council size from 10 to 7

- This governance aspect ranked highest of importance among survey respondents from Wards 2 through 4.



■ 5.0 Next Steps

Feedback provided through the engagement opportunities will be used to inform the motion by Mackenzie County on their recommended governance option. Alberta Municipal Affairs will review Mackenzie County's motion for their preferred governance option and the engagement report before December 1, 2024 to determine next steps for the Mackenzie County governance review.

Members of the public may continue to stay up to date on the project by visiting the project webpage at mackenziecounty.com/GovernanceOptions.



APPENDIX
Mackenzie County Governance Options:
Open House Display Boards

A

Welcome!

Mackenzie County Governance Options PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



Mackenzie County is undertaking public engagement to share the future municipal governance options that have been considered by Council to date and to gather feedback from residents and interested parties to inform Council's resolution to Alberta Municipal Affairs before December 1, 2024.

A third-party consultant, ISL Engineering and Land Services (ISL), a Western Canadian Consulting Firm, has been retained by Mackenzie County to lead the public engagement process.

Please review the following boards to learn more about the project, governance options under consideration, how feedback will inform project decisions, and next steps.

We ask that residents provide their feedback on each of the four future municipal governance options by completing a survey online or by paper.

- Paper copies are available at each open house and for pickup at the County's Offices. Submission details are located on the survey.
- OR
- Visit the virtual open house tool to view the display boards and complete an online survey.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE TOOL:

www.mackenziegovernance.ca



ONLINE SURVEY:

www.surveymonkey.ca/r/mackenziegovernance



Your feedback will inform the decision on which future municipal governance option is recommended to Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Thank you for your time, interest and feedback!



Project Background

Mackenzie County (the County) is undertaking a public engagement process to gather feedback from residents on four future municipal governance options under review for the County.

The County has grown significantly with a population increase of 14.9% in the last six years. The 2024 population is 14,380 and due to the increased population, it is necessary to review whether the Ward boundaries fairly and effectively represent the citizens of the County. The County currently has 10 Wards, with each Ward having one Councillor.

Under the Alberta Municipal Government Act (sections 148 and 150), a municipality's council has the authority to make changes to its Ward boundaries by passing a bylaw.

Purpose of Engagement

The County is seeking feedback from residents and interested parties on the four future governance options to inform their recommendation to Municipal Affairs.

Feedback from residents and interested parties will be included in a comprehensive engagement report. The report will be shared with Council to inform their motion for the future municipal governance option they recommend to Municipal Affairs. The engagement report and Council's motion will be used by Municipal Affairs to determine the next steps for Mackenzie County pertaining to its municipal governance structure.

Project Timeline

Project Launch – October 2024

- Initiate project with the County staff.
- Familiarize with local context and governance history.
- Plan and prepare for engagement.

Engage – November 2024

- Share information and gather feedback on governance options.
 - November 6-20, 2024 – virtual open house and online survey.
 - November 12-13, 2024 – Four (4) in-person open houses.
- Prepare Engagement Report to summarize public feedback and engagement.
 - Available November 25, 2024.

Recommendation – November–December 2024

- Council to review engagement report and submit a motion on a future municipal governance option recommendation to Municipal Affairs.
- Municipal Affairs will review engagement report and Council motion to determine next steps for the Mackenzie County governance review.

Additional Information

The Mackenzie Region Municipal Restructuring Project Viability Assessment and Mackenzie County Municipal Ward Boundary and Council Structure Review Reports are available at www.mackenziecounty.com/governanceoptions

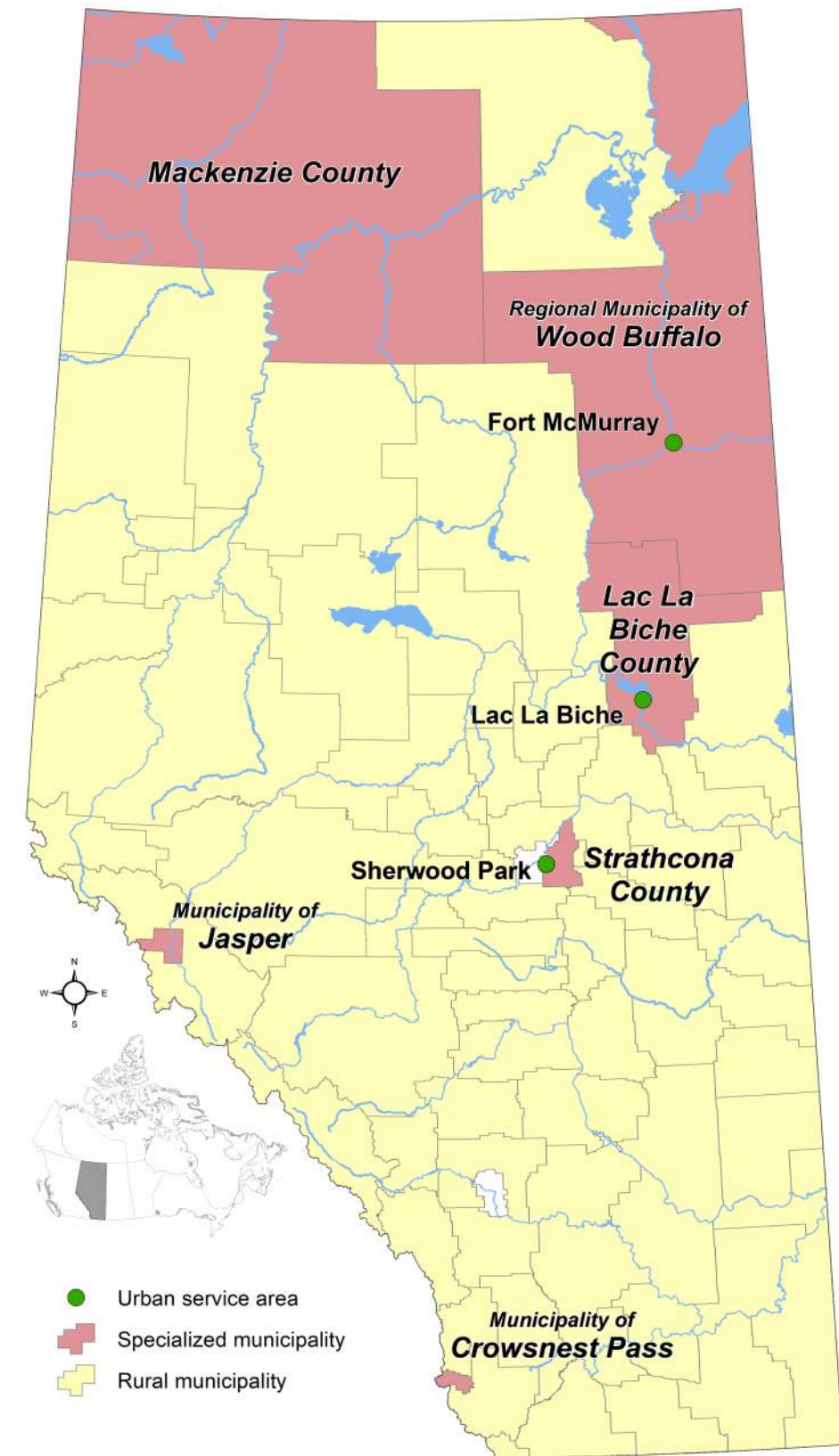
Timeline and History

January 1, 1995	Improvement District (ID) No. 23 incorporates as the Municipal District (MD) of Mackenzie No. 23 with 10 Wards.
June 23, 1999	The MD of Mackenzie No. 23 changes from municipal district status to specialized municipality status (still with 10 Wards) for a temporary basis (three years).
January 30, 2001	Specialized municipality status made permanent by the Government of Alberta. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two-thirds majority votes required on certain financial and other matters. • revenue/cost sharing agreements with towns cannot be terminated or amended without agreement.
March 7, 2007	Name changed from the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23 to Mackenzie County.
April 15, 2019	Mackenzie County was notified of the petition to create new municipality by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and it was accepted as a sufficient petition.
February 26, 2020	Mackenzie County Council passed a motion to support the creation of a new municipality.
November 2021	Viability Assessment report indicates the proposed incorporation would make the remaining Wards 1 through 8 of the County a financially unviable municipality.
March 8, 2022	Mackenzie County Council passes a motion to make the Viability Study publicly available.
April 27, 2022	Mackenzie County Council passes a motion that states that they no longer support the petition as is but would consider a new municipality with different boundaries.

March 21, 2024	Municipal Affairs initiates governance review of Mackenzie County including a Ward boundary review.
June 19, 2024	Mackenzie County Council receives a letter and report from the Minister of Municipal Affairs sharing the third party findings.
July 17, 2024	Mackenzie County Municipal Ward Boundary and Council Structure Review report is shared with the public.
July 17, 2024	County Council defeats motion to maintain status quo governance structure.
August 6, 2024	Members of County Council meet with Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding potential governance changes.
October 16, 2024	Minister of Municipal Affairs directs Mackenzie County to investigate municipal restructuring options at the local level with affected parties.
October 16, 2024	County Council defeats two motions: [1] to support the creation of two municipalities (Wards 1-5 and Wards 6-10) and [2] to merge Wards 9 and 10 and remove specialized municipality status.
November 12-13, 2024	Public open houses held on four governance options for Mackenzie County.
December 1, 2024	Summary of engagement findings and council resolution on how the County would like to proceed is due to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

What is a Specialized Municipality?

- Specialized municipalities are a unique form of municipal government.
- Often, they allow urban and rural communities to coexist in a single municipal government
 - In Mackenzie County's case, the hamlets of Fort Vermilion, La Crete, and Zama City are considered urban.
- There are six specialized municipalities in Alberta.
- The five others include:
 - Strathcona County,
 - the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo,
 - Lac La Biche County,
 - the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, and
 - the Municipality of Jasper.
- Mackenzie County has been a specialized municipality since mid-1999.
 - Why? *"To address concerns about municipal government and management in a municipality that services a number of unique communities within a very large territory."*
- Unique provisions of Mackenzie County's specialized municipality status include:
 - 10 councillors from 10 Wards,
 - bylaws and resolutions relating to municipal governance, finance, etc. must be passed by 2/3rds majority votes, and
 - revenue/cost sharing agreements with two towns cannot be cancelled or revised without consent of the towns.



What is a Municipal District?

- A municipal district (also known as a county) is a municipal government formed in predominantly rural areas of the province.
- It includes:
 - forested areas,
 - farmlands,
 - unincorporated communities such as hamlets, and
 - rural residential subdivisions.
- Generally, its council consists of one councillor per Ward, one of whom is elected by council as reeve.
- Presently, the number of Wards varies from 4 to 11, with the most common being 7.
- There are 63 municipal districts in Alberta.
- Examples of nearby municipal districts include:
 - the County of Northern Lights,
 - Northern Sunrise County, and
 - the Municipal District of Opportunity No. 16.
- Mackenzie County was a municipal district from 1995 to 1999.

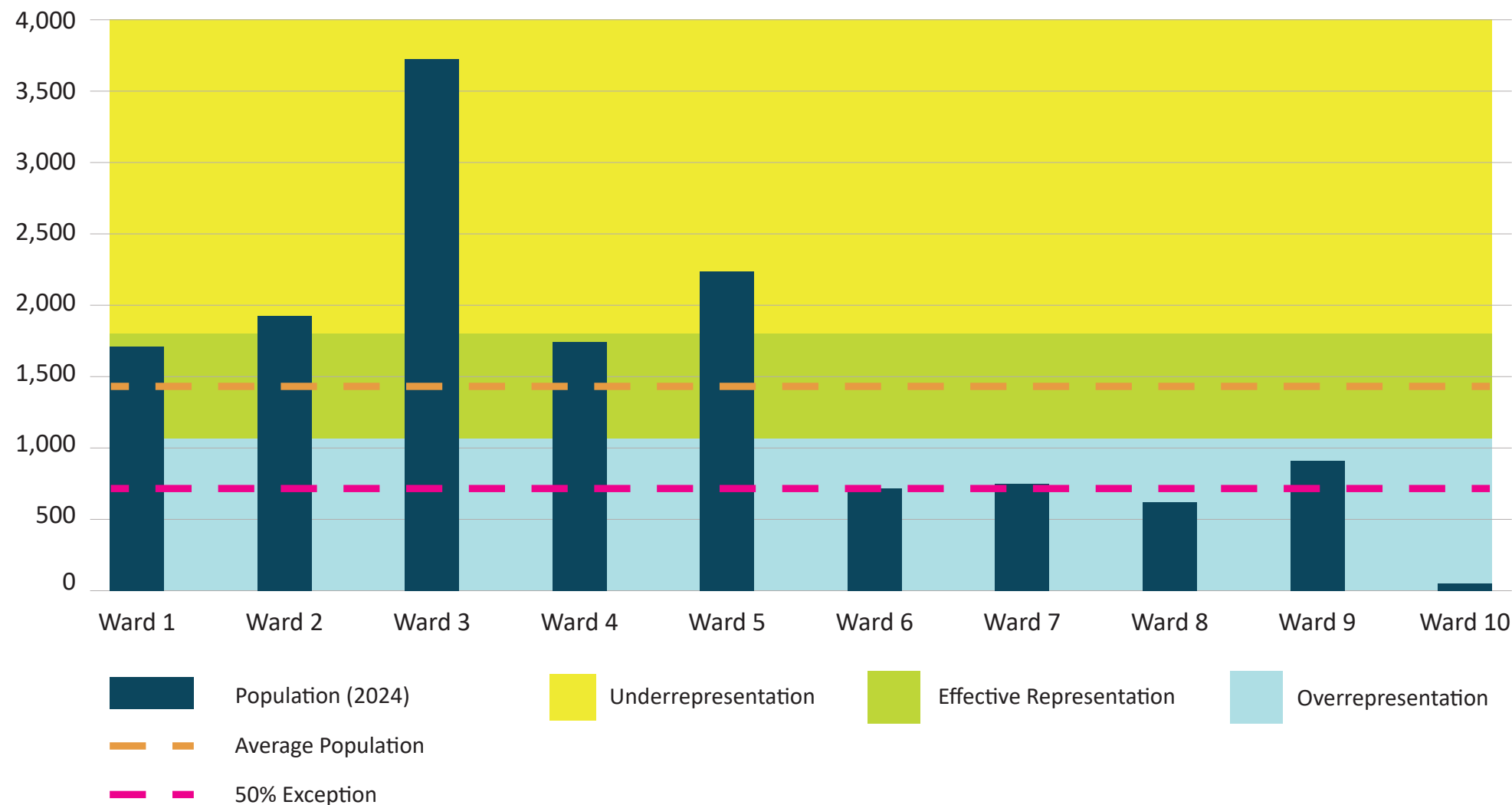


What is Effective Representation by Population?

*“The goal of redistribution is to ensure the constitutional right of **effective representation**.”*

– 1991 Supreme Court of Canada *Case Prov. Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*

The Rule of 25% – Effective Representation



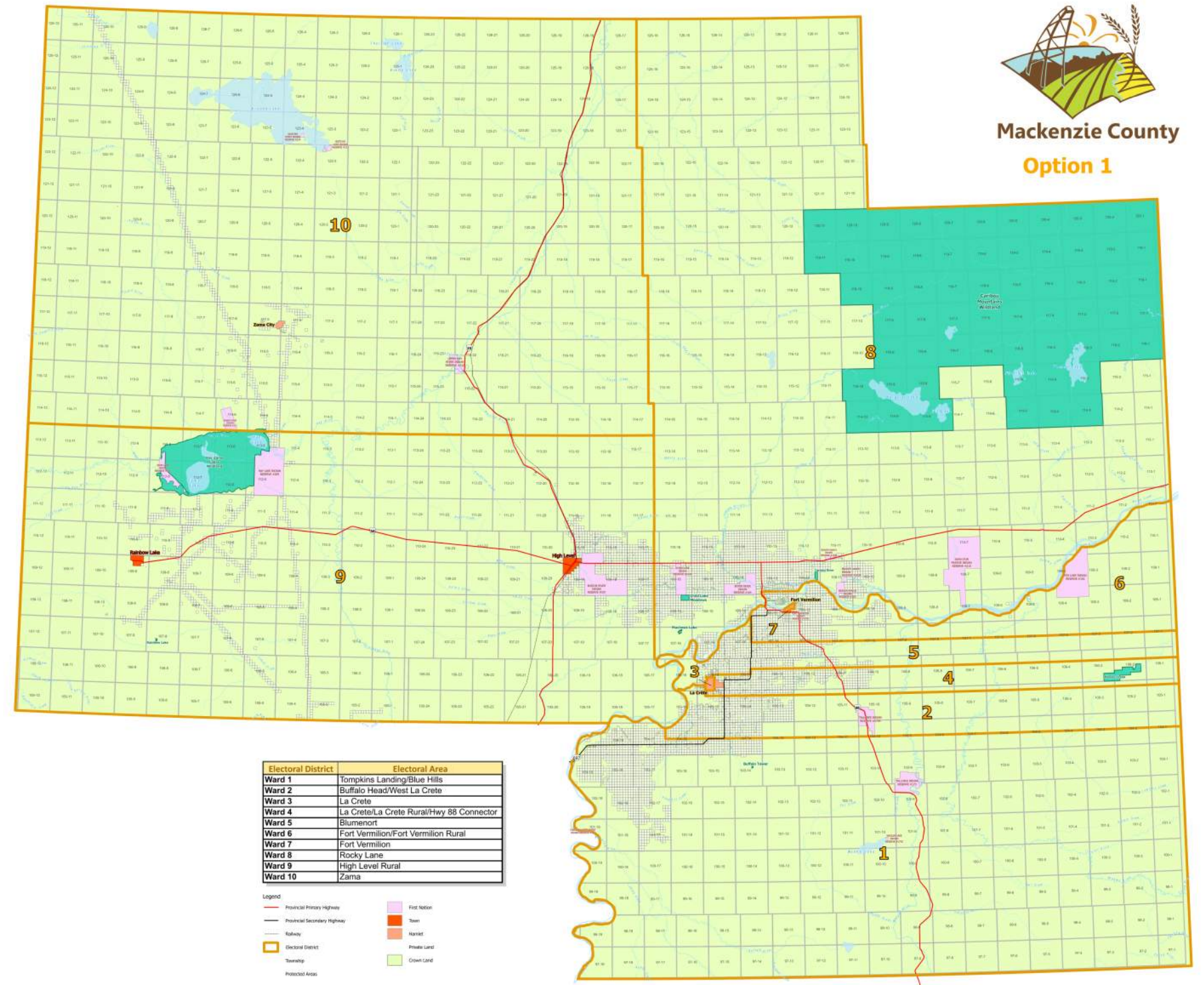
- All Wards should have a population that is within $\pm 25\%$ of the average population per division.
- Imbalance exists when growth or decline results in one or more Wards exceeding the $\pm 25\%$ division.
- Overrepresentation occurs beyond -25% .
- Underrepresentation occurs beyond $+25\%$.
- In the County:
 - only two Wards have effective representation – Wards 1 and 4,
 - three Wards have underrepresentation, and
 - five Wards have overrepresentation.
- However, there is an exception of 50% variance due to geographic size.

Governance Option #1 – Status Quo

Council Motion (Option 1): “That in order to provide the best possible Rural based governance structure within and for the largest rural municipality in the province, which has diverse cultures and communities, a substantial industrial tax base that supports the way of life for our communities, has a mix of urban and rural areas and a large developing land base. Mackenzie County’s governance structure, ward boundaries and specialized municipality status stay as it is, and that the minister of municipal affairs be notified of this council motion.”

Key Details:

- Mackenzie County’s governance structure, Ward boundaries and specialized municipality status would stay as it is today.
- 2/3rds majority votes continue, in which there is a perception of vote trading.
- Overrepresentation continues in Wards 6 through 10.
- Underrepresentation continues in Wards 2, 3, and 5.
- Therefore, there is unequal representation of residents in 80% of Wards due to current population throughout the County.
- Stronger geographic representation as a whole.
- No taxation/assessment changes.
- \$\$\$ This is the second most expensive option. While no additional costs, other options have cost savings.
- Magnitude of cost savings or implications will require further investigation in future.

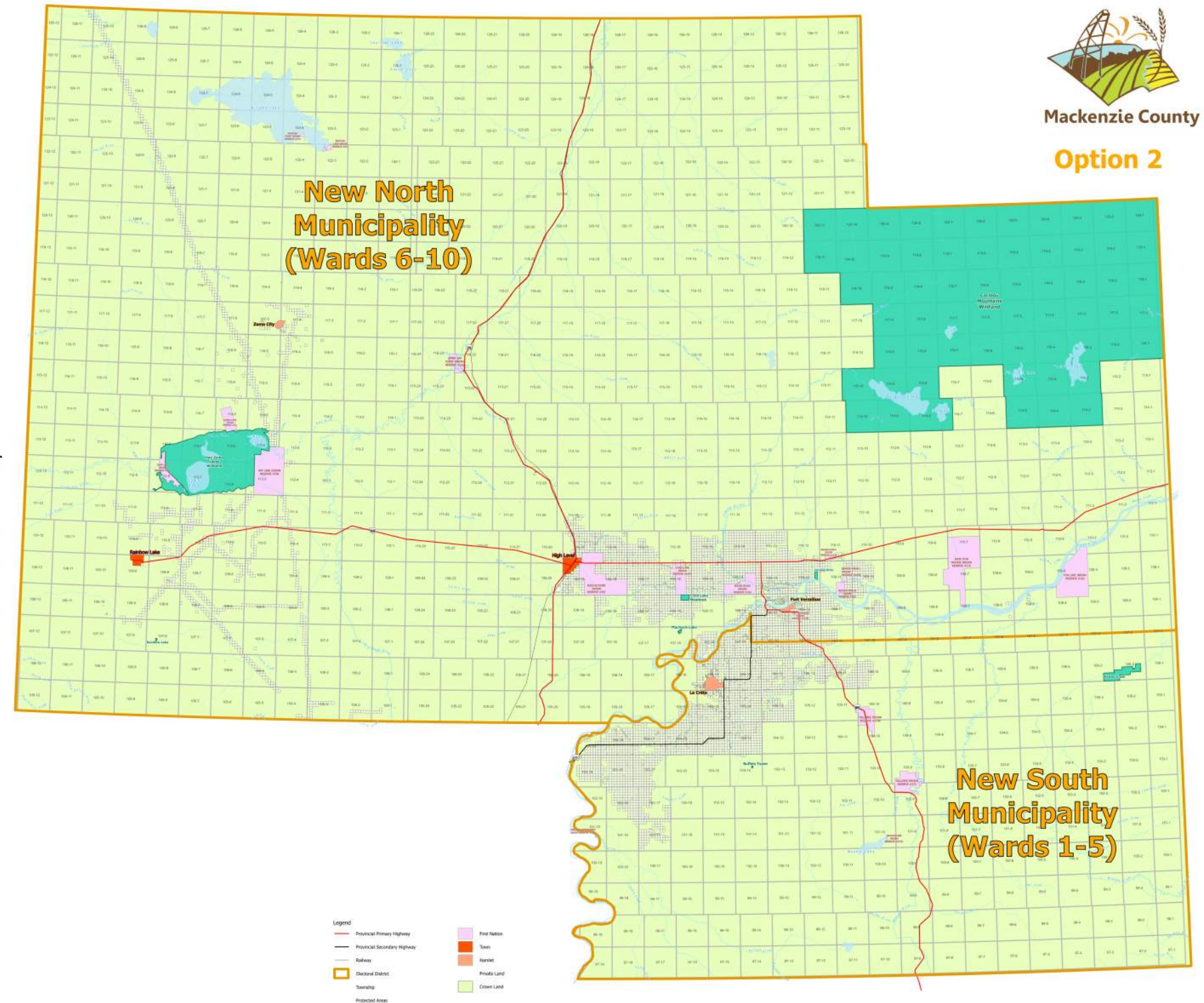


Governance Option #2 – Creation of Two Municipalities (Wards 1-5 and 6-10)

Council Motion (Option 2): “That Council moves to support the creation of two municipalities, comprised of wards one through five and six through ten, this would create two growing municipalities that would be larger than most in landmass and above average in population and revenue, this would create governance structure and decision making that is closer to the people. That are sustainable long-term, would create another northern municipal voice, would allow for more northern priorities to be addressed and an additional northern partner with projects and grants, both new entities will strive to be long term positive northern advocates. This change will be completed in conjunction with robust community and citizen engagement and will take place during the next municipal term.”

Key Details:

- Mackenzie County would be split into two municipalities, one comprised of Wards 1-5 and the other comprised of Wards 6-10.
- This split would create two growing municipalities that would be larger than most in landmass and above average in population and revenue.
- Perceived as a more fair representation.
- More focused on service delivery and projects.
- More aligned demographics/values between each municipality.
- Two separate tax bases – potential implications on taxes and service delivery.
- Requires new bylaws, policies, and plans for both municipalities.
- Split of assets and liabilities.
- New governance structures.
- Potential changes to grant funding.
- Lesser populations between both municipalities.
- Requires new revenue/service sharing agreements.
- Requires new infrastructure sharing agreements such as for a rural water line.
- \$\$\$\$ This is the most expensive option. There will be additional costs to run two municipalities. Also, it may impact taxes or service delivery to make the new municipality south of the Peace River viable.
- Magnitude of cost savings or implications will require further investigation in future.

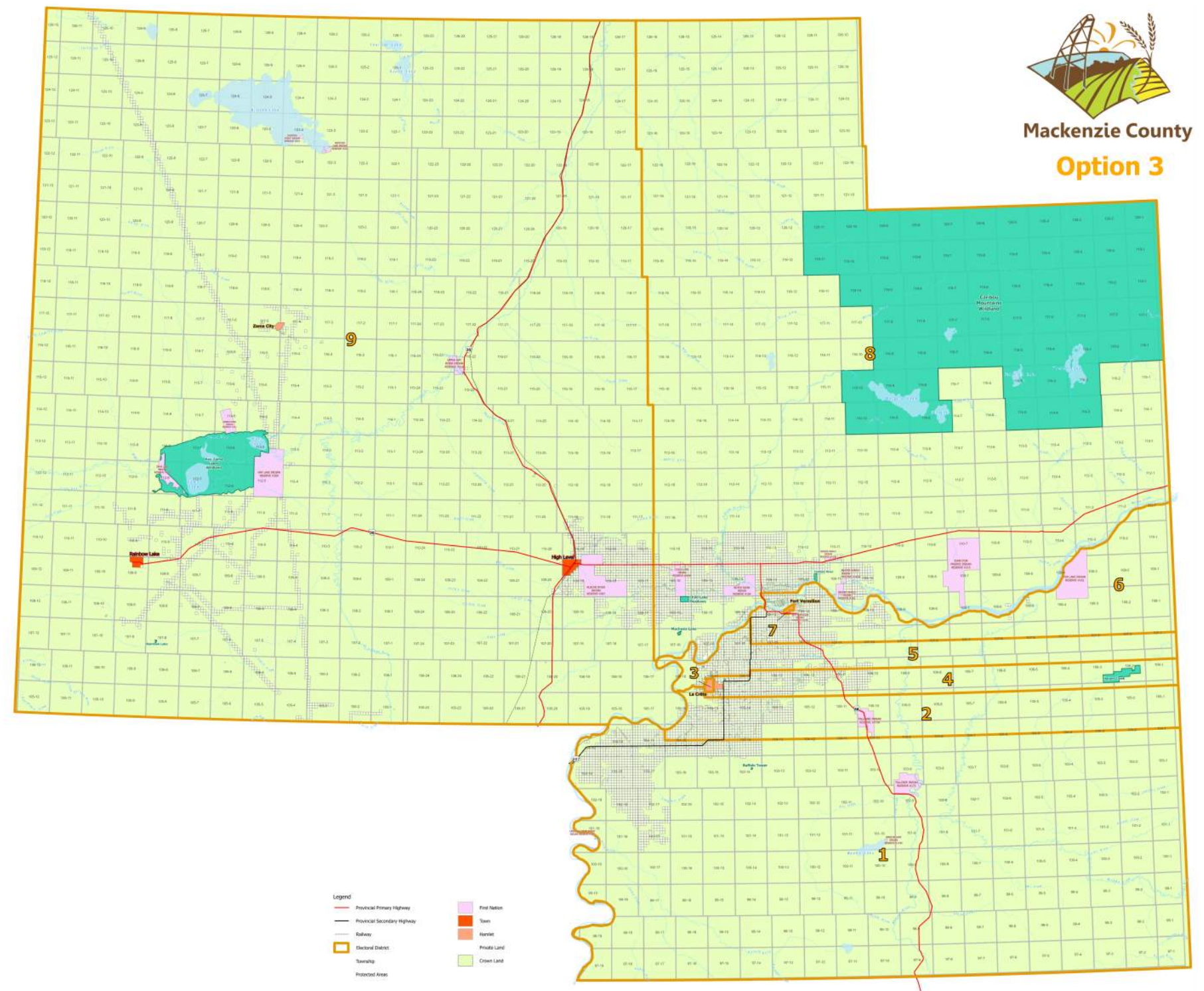


Governance Option #3 – Amalgamation of Wards 9 and 10

Council Motion (Option 3): “That Council draft a letter to Municipal Affairs that supports the amalgamation of Wards 9 and 10 because of variation of representation of population and the removal of the Specialized Municipality Status.”

Key Details:

- County Council’s size would be reduced to 9 Councillors from the current 10. This would be done by merging Ward 10 (Zama) with Ward 9 (High Level Rural). The merged Ward would then only elect one Councillor.
- One Councillor for a large geographic area (new Ward 9).
- Less representation in the northern portion of the County.
- Removal of specialized municipality status, meaning Mackenzie County would return to its original municipal district status.
- Current 2/3rds majority votes would no longer be required for Council decisions involving finance (budget, taxes, and council pay) and governance (procedures, Ward boundaries, number of councillors, County manager employment, etc.).
- No changes to taxation/assessment.
- Unintended consequence: Removes the requirement to obtain permission from the towns of High Level and Rainbow Lake to cancel or revise existing revenue/cost sharing agreements.
- New Ward 9 moves closer to effective representation.
- \$\$ This is the second-least expensive option. It would result in cost-savings because it would reduce council size by one member.
- Magnitude of cost savings or implications will require further investigation in future.

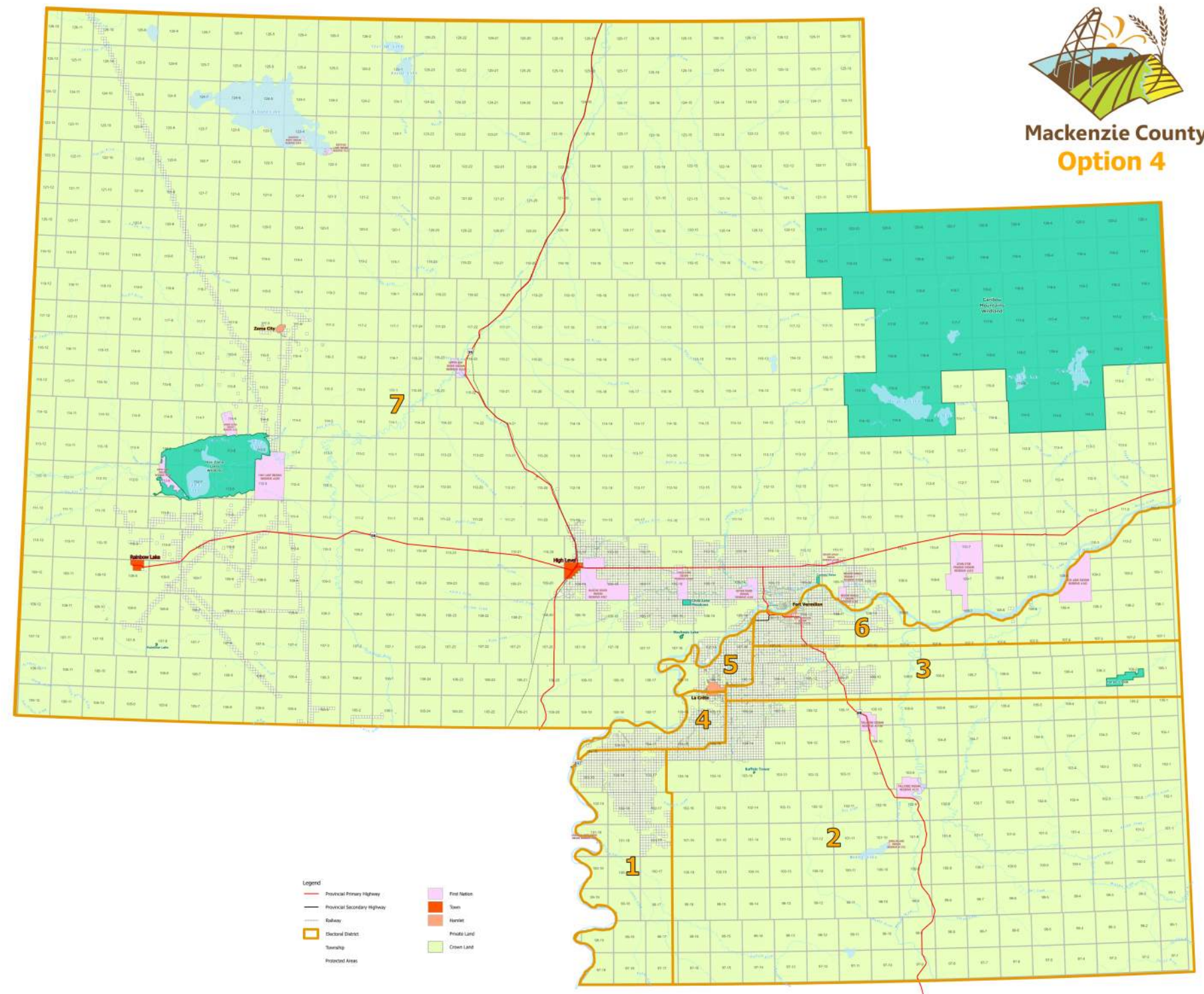


Governance Option #4 – Reduction from 10 to 7 Wards

Municipal Affairs Recommendation: From the 2024 Mackenzie County Municipal Ward Boundary and Council Structure Review report by Transitional Solutions Inc. (TSI).

Key Details:

- County Council's size would be reduced to 7 Councillors from the current 10. This would be done by merging all lands north of the Peace River into a single new Ward 7. The merged Ward would then only elect one Councillor for a very large geographic area.
- Six revised Wards south of the Peace River.
- Hamlet of Fort Vermilion would include rural lands to west, south, and east.
- Hamlet of La Crete split into two Wards along 94 Avenue (Twp Rd 1061), both including rural lands.
- Less representation in the northern portion of the County.
- Removal of specialized municipality status, meaning Mackenzie County would return to its original municipal district status.
- Current 2/3rds majority votes would no longer be required for Council decisions involving finance and governance.
- No changes to taxation/assessment.
- Unintended consequence: Removes the requirement to obtain permission from the towns of High Level and Rainbow Lake to cancel or revise existing revenue/cost sharing agreements.
- Improved effective representation.
- \$ This is the least expensive option. It would result in cost-savings because it would reduce council size by three members.
- Magnitude of cost savings or implications will require further investigation in future.



How to Provide Feedback

We encourage you to attend an in-person public open house or visit the virtual open house tool to:

- review the display boards and learn more about the future governance options; and
- provide your feedback by completing a paper or online survey.

The online survey will be available from **November 6-20, 2024**.

The virtual open house and online survey can be accessed using this link or QR code.



VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE TOOL

www.mackenziegovernance.ca



ONLINE SURVEY

www.surveymonkey.ca/r/mackenziegovernance

Next Steps

Once the public engagement process is complete, the ISL Engagement Team will:

- Prepare a comprehensive engagement report to summarize the engagement process and what we heard from residents and interested parties about each of the four future municipal governance options being reviewed.
- The engagement report will be provided to Council on November 25, 2024, to inform their motion for the future municipal governance option they recommend to Alberta Municipal Affairs.
- Alberta Municipal Affairs will be provided with the comprehensive engagement report and Council's motion for the future municipal governance option recommendation.
- Alberta Municipal Affairs will review the engagement report and Council's motion as they decide the next steps in the governance review for Mackenzie County.
- Residents and interested parties can stay up to date regarding the governance review in the coming months through the County's website, newsletter and social media posts.

Thank you for your participation in the Mackenzie County Governance project! We appreciated your time and feedback!



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