

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of the Executive Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: 

Caroline Blair-Smith, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 7, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 District Boundary Review – Phase One Recommendation

ORIGIN

The Municipal Government Act requires that HRM undertake a district boundary review every eight (8) years. An application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors is due by December 31, 2022.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Role of Regional Council:

Municipal Government Act, S.N.S. 1998, c. 18, s. 369

369 (1) In the year 1999, and in the year 2006 and every eight years thereafter the council shall conduct a study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness and the number of councillors.

(2) After the study is completed and before the end of the year in which the study was conducted the council shall apply to the Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors

Role of Executive Standing Committee:

December 14, 2021 motion of Halifax Regional Council designating Executive Standing Committee (ESC) to undertake Phase One of the District Boundary Review and bring forward a recommendation to Regional Council on or before May 31, 2022, with regard to the number of Municipal Polling Districts appropriate to regional decision making, including a Community Council governance structure for the HRM.

Role of District Boundary Resident Review Panel:

Administrative Order 2022-001-GOV, Respecting the Special Advisory Committee for the 2022 Halifax Regional Municipality District Boundary Review, section 5:

Duties of the Committee

5. The Committee shall advise Council, through Executive Standing Committee, on proposed boundaries for the electoral districts of the Municipality by:

- (a) leading a public engagement process in alignment with this Administrative Order and guidance from past decisions of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board;
- (b) analyzing responses and themes from public engagement to inform the Committee's recommendations to Council; and
- (c) adjusting the current district boundaries to develop proposed boundaries that take into consideration:
 - (i) the direction of Regional Council from Phase One of the District Boundary review;
 - (ii) the results of the public engagement process; and
 - (iii) the objectives set out in section 368(4) of the Municipal Government Act, including consideration of the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest, and geographic size.

Role of Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB):

Municipal Government Act, S.N.S. 1998, c. 18, s. 369

- 368 (1) Upon application, the Board may, by order
- (a) divide or redivide a municipality into polling districts;
 - (b) amend the boundaries of any polling district;
 - ...
 - (e) determine the number of councillors for a municipality...
 - ...
- (4) In determining the number and boundaries of polling districts the Board shall consider number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest and geographic size.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that to complete Phase I of the District Boundary Review, the Executive Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Confirm the number of polling districts and the number of councillors at sixteen, and direct this to be applied to Phase Two of the 2022 District Boundary Review: and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to Council with a report on the potential electoral reforms set out in the body of this report, including any necessary legislative amendments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the results of the public engagement process for Phase One of the 2022 District Boundary Review project which was approved by Executive Standing Committee at its February 28 and March 28, 2022 meetings. Included with this report are the following:

- 2022 Halifax Regional Council District Boundary Review, Phase One Study – What We Heard Report (Attachment 1)
- 2022 District Boundary Review, Phase One Study - Community Council Presentation (Attachment 2)
- January 18, 2022 staff report regarding the Phase One Public Engagement Process presented to Executive Standing Committee on February 28, 2022 (Attachment 3)
- March 1, 2022 staff report regarding the Phase One Public Engagement Process and revised project timeline presented to Executive Standing Committee on March 28, 2022 (Attachment 4)

Ultimately, Regional Council will submit an application to the NSUARB to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors. It is recommended that the Executive Standing Committee provide a rationale for its recommendation to Regional Council for Phase One to support the application to the NSUARB. Staff will provide an overview of the feedback provided from both the public and members of Regional Council obtained throughout the public engagement activities for Phase One of 2022 District Boundary Review. The rationale and recommendation provided by Executive Standing Committee through the discussion of this report on May 30, 2022 will be included as a part of the cover report when forwarded to Regional Council for ratification.

BACKGROUND

On December 13, 2021, Council approved the two phased approach as recommended by the NSUARB¹ for 2022 District Boundary Review as follows: Phase One to determine the size of Council and its governance structure, and Phase Two to set the specific district boundaries. In addition to this, Council designated Executive Standing Committee to lead Phase One of the 2022 District Boundary Review and return to Council on or before June 14, 2022 with a recommendation about the number of Municipal Polling Districts appropriate to regional decision making, including a Community Council governance structure for the HRM.

The role of Executive Standing Committee within this process is as follows:

- Advise on the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the existing governance model for Regional Council,
- Provide direction and confirmation on public engagement activities as well as required information for evaluation,
- Participate in the public engagement sessions,
- Receive “what we heard” reports from phase one of public engagement and provide feedback prior to a formal submission to Regional Council
- Provide a recommendation, based on public consultation, to Regional Council on the recommended number of polling districts and governance structure on or before June 14, 2022.

On February 28, 2022, Executive Standing Committee approved the Phase One public engagement process and timeline for the 2022 District Boundary Review project. At its next meeting held on March 28, 2022 the Executive Standing approved the proposed survey questions and a revised timeline for Phase One of the District Boundary Review project which includes the following:

¹ NSUARB Website. <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/mandates/municipal-boundaries>

- An online public engagement survey which seeks feedback from the public on the size of Council and governance structure of HRM;
- Individual interviews with members of Regional Council conducted;
- Public Information meetings hosted by HRM's Community Councils;
- Corresponding and engaging with the Executive Standing Committee via public participation.

Additionally, in February of 2022, Halifax Regional Council, on the advice of Executive Standing Committee, approved the creation of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel, a citizen led committee with expertise in the areas of municipal governance, public administration, and planning. The District Boundary Resident Review Panel will advise Regional Council, through Executive Standing Committee, on the boundaries of the municipal electoral districts for the Municipality for Phase Two of the project. An orientation meeting was held on May 12, 2022 and the Panel's first official meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2022.

DISCUSSION

Process

The process for conducting a district boundary review is governed by the Municipal Government Act (MGA). Section 369 of the MGA requires the Council of a municipality to conduct a study on the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness, and the number of councillors every eight years. This review process culminates with Halifax Regional Council submitting an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) to confirm or alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors.

The MGA gives the NSUARB jurisdiction over these applications, and the NSUARB is required by the legislation to consider the applications and issue decisions with respect to the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors for each municipal unit in Nova Scotia. As part of its process, the NSUARB will set dates for a hearing, at which the Municipality will lead evidence through witnesses to support the application and the processes it followed. Hearings include a public hearing to allow members of the public to comment and may also include interveners or expert witnesses retained by the NSUARB.

In reviewing applications from Nova Scotia municipalities, the NSUARB must consider the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest and geographic size as outlined in section 368(4) of the MGA².

In its 2004 decision respecting the Municipality's district boundaries, the Board provided the following guidance for future applications:

It is the Board's view that the logical starting point under the Act is for Council to determine the desired number of councillors. Questions related to the distribution of polling districts should be addressed in a second stage.

Determining the size of Council involves the consideration of the desired style of Council, the governance structure of Council, and a determination of an effective and efficient number of councillors.

The style of government is a question which should not be decided by Council until adequate public consultation has occurred respecting the expectation of constituents. However, the size of Council and its governance structure is a matter to be determined by Council in an informed debate after further consultation. On this issue, it would be helpful to consult senior staff and perhaps experts in the field. Once the total number of councillors and polling districts is determined, the task

² NSUARB Website. <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/mandates/municipal-boundaries>

becomes one of distributing the polling districts to satisfy the objectives listed in section 368(4) of the Act (paragraphs 107-111).

There have been governance aspects identified in past reviews, and within the current Phase One study, that are not within the jurisdiction of the NSUARB. The NSUARB does not have jurisdiction to amend legislation or to consider proposals with respect to the number of councillors and polling districts, or the boundaries of the polling districts, that are not enabled under the current legislative framework. This includes legislation such as the *HRM Charter*, the *Municipal Elections Act (MEA)* or the *MGA*. Items such as voter eligibility, designated electoral districts for certain groups, and councillor nomination requirements require legislative changes and are out of scope for the boundary review application.

The district boundary application to the NSUARB should reflect existing legislation, and not assume any future amendments. The public engagement process for Phase One of the District Boundary Review therefore focuses on changes respecting the size of Council and the governance structure which is currently permitted under the legislative framework.

Consultation

Survey

The survey was developed by Narrative Research and incorporated feedback from Executive Standing Committee relative to the Phase One study parameters. It was designed to gain measurable data from the public respecting the number of councillors and electoral districts for the HRM, the accessibility of Council, and the effectiveness of its current governance structure. It provided the public with information relative to the role of municipal council within the Halifax Regional Municipality, the current and projected population per district, the current and projected number of electors per district and comparative information on similar municipalities in Canada and other orders of government within Nova Scotia.

The survey ran from April 6 to April 25, 2022 on the HRM District Boundary Review website and was promoted by HRM Corporate Communications. Information on the survey and how to engage in the process was also shared by members of Council through their online newsletters and through their social media accounts. In addition to the survey being made available to the general public online, the survey was also sent to members of Narrative Research's East Coast Voice online panel, to ensure a minimum level of survey completions were achieved across a representative sample of residents. At the time of closure, 1199 completed responses were received between individual visits to the District Boundary Review website (766) and the East Coast Voice online panel (433) promoted by Narrative Research. The analysis from the survey can be found on pages 16-53 of the "What We Heard" report included as attachment one of this report.

Public Information Meetings hosted by HRM Community Council

Beginning on April 19 and running until April 28, 2022 HRM's four Community Councils hosted both in person and virtual information meetings on Phase One of the District Boundary Review. These meetings provided the opportunity for members of the public to provide their feedback on the size of Council and number of electoral districts for the HRM and share their experiences interacting with Council or how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its governance structure. The public information meetings were held:

- April 19, 2022 – Halifax and West Community Council
- April 20, 2022 – Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council
- April 25, 2022 – North West Community Council
- April 28, 2022 – Regional Centre Community Council

Despite the promotion of the public information meetings by HRM Corporate Communications, there was little participation from members of the public and no speakers. Factors such as the proliferation of the online survey and rising cases of COVID-19 within the community were factors. Staff were able to gain

feedback from members of council through the public engagement meetings on matters related of electoral reform, process improvement, and the role of Council within the District Boundary Review project. An overview of the topics discussed at these meetings can be found on pages 53-55 of the “What We Heard” report included as attachment one of this report.

Correspondence and public participation with Executive Standing Committee

The Municipal Clerk’s Office has received a total of four pieces of correspondence from the public related to Phase One of the District Boundary Review. This correspondence has been distributed to members of Executive Standing Committee and provided for inclusion within the “What We Heard” report. Members of the public were and continue to be encouraged to attend meetings of Executive Standing Committee and register to speak during public participation. There have been no registered speakers to date who have addressed Executive Standing Committee on Phase One of the Boundary Review.

Interviews with members of council

From April 14 to May 4, 2022, Narrative Research conducted individual interviews with all members of Council. The interview questions requested feedback on the Phase One study criteria specific to councillors who are currently serving as elected representatives. These include determining councillor’s opinions on factors such as the appropriate number of councillors for HRM, the means of determining electoral districts, and HRM’s current governance structure. These interviews have been conducted in response to constructive feedback from the NSUARB from the 2010 Boundary Review and quoted in the 2011 NSUARB decision:

[71] Dr. Williams stated that if he were asked to conduct a study he would have incorporated, as a start, the five questions asked by the UK Electoral Commission.

- 1) Roles and responsibilities of the councillor.*
- 2) Allocation of councillor time.*
- 3) Council size and efficiency and effectiveness.*
- 4) Council characteristics.*
- 5) Members per ward and councillor workload.³*

The analysis of this qualitative information can be found on pages 7-15 in the “What We Heard” report included as attachment one of this report. In addition to this, staff are also providing additional information related to meeting frequency for Council, Regional Council, Standing Committees and Boards and Committees from fiscal 2018/19 to fiscal 2021/2022 as well as the number of staff reports generated and considered by each these meeting bodies from 2018 to 2021. This information is being provided for additional context relative to the workload of an HRM Councillor. It applies only to the business of council and does not reflect an individual councillor’s constituency work commitments and associations with external groups.

Fiscal 2018/19 Meeting Count	
Regional Council	24
Committee of the Whole	17
Community Council	49
Standing Committees	53
Boards and Committees	124
Total	267

³ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, section 75.

Fiscal 2019/2020 Meeting Count	
Regional Council	30
Committee of the Whole	19
Community Council	37
Standing Committees	52
Boards and Committees	123
Total	261

Fiscal 2020/2021 Meeting Count	
Regional Council	26
Committee of the Whole	26
Community Council	40
Standing Committees	31
Boards and Committees	88
Total	211

Fiscal 2021/2022 Meeting Count	
Regional Council	26
Committee of the Whole	7
Budget Committee	20
Community Council	44
Standing Committees	57
Boards and Committees	116
Total	270

It should be noted that beginning in fiscal 2021/2022, the Municipal Clerk's Office began including Budget Committee within the fiscal meeting counts. Prior to this, budget meetings were recorded as Committee of the Whole meetings.

Staff have also included information relating to the number of staff reports generated and received by Council, Community Council, Standing Committees which receive and request staff reports (attachment 5). It does not include Advisory Boards and Committees that include councillors on their membership. This data spans from 2018 to 2021. In October 2019 and January 2020, HRM's Planning and Development staff-initiated development application reports were included into Report Centre, which increased the number of reports generated from previous years.

As a part of this review research was completed on the use of councillors time, including work required outside of formal meetings of Regional Council and Committees. The Councillor Support Office completed a survey of individual councillors and their reported daily activities. Councillors self-reported spending an average of 3.62 hours/day on email, 1.3 hours/day on phone calls, 1.72 hours/day on social media and 2.41 hours/day on research. On average, councillors report being involved in 6 additional community groups beyond HRM committees. Councillors spend on average 7 hours preparing for a Council meeting, 2.75 hours preparing for a community council meeting, 2.87 hours preparing for a standing committee meeting, and 3.125 hours preparing for other boards and committees per week. Travel varied widely by district.

Analysis

Number of Municipal Districts

Phase One of the District Boundary Review requires Regional Council to determine the appropriate number of Municipal Districts, which will form the basis for Phase Two of the District Boundary Review. This will be submitted as part of Council’s application to the NSUARB. Executive Standing Committee’s role is to provide a recommendation to Regional Council, including rational, which will form evidence submitted as part of the NSUARB application.

The effective number of councillors and electoral districts were considered as a part of the Phase One public consultation through the survey conducted by Narrative Research, the qualitative interviews with members of Regional Council, and the public information sessions hosted by Community Council.

Responses from the public consultation and interviews with members of Council respecting the size of Council are found on pages 11-15 and 21-31 of the “What We Heard” report which is included as attachment one of this report. Findings of the public consultation undertaken for Phase One of the District Boundary Review in relation to the size of Council are included on page six of the “What We Heard” report with a comprehensive breakdown of this information on page 51.

The public submissions on the number of districts in the “What We Heard” report support a recommendation of 16 districts within the HRM.

When respondents were provided with comparable information from other jurisdictions on council size and representation, a majority of residents indicated that HRM has the right number of councillors relative to its number of residents (page 27 of the “What We Heard” report).

In the March 1, 2022 staff report to Executive Committee (Attachment 4), current and projected populations for the HRM were provided as well as the number of electors per district. A jurisdictional scan of comparable Canadian cities was provided as well in this report.

Current Population of HRM	Current percentage of population per district for HRM (2022)	Current total number of electors in HRM (2022)	Current percentage of electors per district for HRM (2022)	Projected number of electors per district for HRM (2024)	Projected percentage of electors per district for HRM (2024)	Jurisdictional Scan percentage of population average (2022)
439,819	6.25%	358,497	6.23%	378,948	6.24%	6.72%

Currently, councillors in each municipal district in HRM represent an average of 6.25% of HRM’s overall population. This is slightly below the average of 6.72% when compared to other similar municipalities across the country. Of the municipalities considered, representation ranges from 4% per district (Toronto) to 10% (Saskatoon and Kitchener). Despite this, HRM’s population continues to increase at a rapid pace. In the December 21, 2021 “What We Heard” report related to the Regional Plan Review staff have noted that “in the last few years, Halifax has experienced unprecedented population growth, advancing from an approximate 1% growth rate in the early 2000s to a 2% annual growth rate in the last few years”⁴.

Furthermore, staff have provided the following annual population growth scenario for HRM out to the year 2050 based on current trends:

⁴ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/211214rc1519.pdf> , page 6.

Population Scenario	Approximate Annual Population Increase	Approximate projected annual household increase	Approximate total population as of 2050
Low	5300	2500	537,774
Moderate	9800	4300	714,533
High	14,600	6400	943,014
High High	21,100	8700	1,102,525

**These values represent the average annual growth projected in each population scenario for the years 2022-2026; they are not meant to be predictive but to help demonstrate order of magnitude of change.⁵

Maintaining the current number of districts within the HRM is supported by the “What We Heard” report and is in line with municipalities considered within the jurisdictional scan. Staff are recommending that the number of polling districts and the number of councillors remain at sixteen and that this be applied to Phase Two of the 2022 District Boundary Review. However, the recent rise in population growth in the HRM will need to be monitored closely as it will have an impact on future District Boundary studies respecting the number of councillors and polling boundaries required for effective representation as the municipality continues to grow.

Governance Structure

Information on Council's current governance structure was provided to Executive Standing Committee on February 28, 2022 included as attachment three (3) of this report. This report informed the online survey and public information presentation hosted by Community Council. A copy of this presentation is included as attachment two (2) of this report. Both the survey and the public information presentation sought feedback on participant knowledge and their experiences interacting with Council and its governance structure. Residents were asked whether the existing governance structure is accessible, allows for effective decision making and representation for residents or their districts. The engagement activities offered residents an opportunity to provide commentary on HRM's Community Councils, Standing Committees and Advisory Committees in their current state and how to make them more effective.

The feedback from the public survey on the governance structure can be found on pages 32-35 of attachment one in the “What We Heard” report. Feedback provided by members of Council respecting HRM's governance structure can be viewed on pages nine (9) and ten (10). Phase One of the District Boundary review considered the overall governance structure of the Halifax Regional Municipality, it did not examine each committee of Regional Council individually. The last comprehensive review of HRM's current governance structure occurred in 2014.

Midway through the Phase One study for the 2022 District Boundary Review, the Province of Nova Scotia amended the *HRM Charter (An Act to Amend Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Respecting Housing, S.N.S. 2022, c. 13)*. The majority of the Act came into effect on April 22, 2022. The amendments to the HRM Charter include changes to the municipal planning process, including pausing the work of some advisory committees with respect to planning decisions for a period of three years.

Based on the information provided in the “What We Heard” report staff are not recommending changes to the current governance structure for Halifax Regional Council at this time.

Electoral Reforms requiring Legislative Amendments

Throughout the public engagement activities for Phase One, staff have heard from members of council about specific electoral reforms that are out of scope for the District Boundary Review. The following items have been identified for further consideration:

⁵ <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/211214rc1519.pdf> , page 6.

- The inclusion of designated or protected seats for specific groups (African Nova Scotian, Francophonie, Indigenous representation)
- Reducing the voting age to 16 years of age
- Extending voting and candidacy rights landed immigrants/new Canadians
- The use of a ranked ballot or run-off ballot system
- Adding Permanent Residents to the list of electors to vote in municipal elections

Currently, the only formal direction provided by Regional Council on these items is with respect to including permanent residents on the list of electors and allowing permanent residents to vote in municipal elections. A formal request for legislative amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act* was approved by motion of Council on December 2, 2014. Council was advised in 2019:

The Province has indicated it viewed the ability to vote as inseparable from the ability to nominate candidates and run-in elections. The question of permanent resident voting was considered, at various stages, of the administrative review of the elections process which took place from February to May 2019. Although there were several discussions, the Municipal Elections Review Advisory Committee did not recommend amendments to the Municipal Elections Act at this time to allow permanent residents to vote, nominate, and run. The Committee pointed out that it would require significant revisions to other sections of the Municipal Elections Act, including changes to the voter identification requirements and election processes. As the committee was comprised of administrators, most proposed amendments were administrative in nature. The Committee's recommendations are with the Minister for review.⁶

If Council wishes to further advance any of the items listed above, staff recommend that Executive Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to Council with a report on these matters. This will give Council a detailed analysis on how these measures could be implemented within the Halifax Regional Municipality and provide a comprehensive a policy assessment to support any formal legislative amendment requests.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff have awarded Narrative Research Associates with a contract to develop a survey and assist with the collection and analysis of data from the public engagement activities related to Phase One. The cost for these services is \$35,353 net HST included. Additionally, a communications plan was developed to promote the survey, public engagement meetings, and other forms of engagement in print ads in media outlets across the municipality, digital ads, graphic communications on HRM's digitalized screens. The total cost of the Communications plan is \$7,816 for a total of \$43,169 for the Phase One study of the District Boundary Review. This funding is available in the approved 2022/2023 operational budget in A125 – 6399 (Elections – Contract Services).

RISK CONSIDERATION

The District Boundary Review is a legislatively required action. Staff are recommending that Phase One of the District Boundary review project be complete on or before June 14, 2022 to ensure that the project remains on track to meet the NSUARB application deadline of December 31, 2022.

⁶ August 8, 2019 In Camera (In Private) staff report re: Legislative Requests Update – Spring 2019 pp.5
<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/190917ic-i01.pdf> (Declassified October 22, 2019)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Executive Standing Committee has led public engagement activities for Phase One of the 2022 District Boundary Review Study. This included the development and promotion of an online survey, public information meetings hosted by Community Council, correspondence from members of the public, and public reports and presentations provided to Executive Standing Committee.

A comprehensive communications plan for Phase One of the District Boundary Review project was developed in consultation with HRM Corporate Communications and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This communications plan advises and informs the public on the purpose of the District Boundary Review and how they can engage in the process in simple and accessible language. The communications strategy included print ads in media outlets across the municipality, graphic communications on HRM's digitalized screens, and a comprehensive social media campaign. Additionally, information on the District Boundary Review was communicated through HRM's social media accounts and posted online at www.halifax.ca/boundaryreview.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

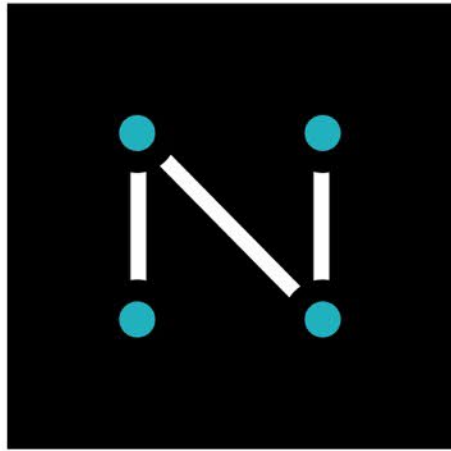
1. The Executive Standing Committee could choose to refer this report and recommendation on Phase One of the District Boundary Review to Committee of the Whole for discussion on June 14, 2022 prior to Halifax Regional Council.
2. The Executive Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council alter the number of the number of polling districts and the number of councillors.
3. The Executive Standing Committee could recommend that Regional Council initiate a governance review, and the timing and scope thereof.

ATTACHMENTS

1. What We Heard Report – Narrative Research
2. Community Council Presentation
3. January 18, 2022 staff report – Phase One public engagement process
4. March 1, 2022 staff report – Phase One public engagement process and revised project timeline

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

2022 Halifax Regional Council District Boundary Review, Phase One Study – What we Heard Report

May 2022

HALIFAX

Attachment 1



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NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

Introduction



The Halifax Regional Council is conducting its periodic District Boundary Review study. This initiative is provincially-mandated and entails each municipality in Nova Scotia reviewing the number of councillors and municipal polling district every 8 years. The findings of this study will be used to inform the NSUARB in its decision on the size of Council and the polling boundaries within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

The online resident survey and qualitative interviews of members of Halifax Regional Council are part of the First Phase of the Halifax Regional Council District Boundary Review study. Gathering and analyzing these inputs will help inform the recommendations of the Executive Standing Committee to Regional Council on any changes to the number of municipal councillors, polling districts and governance structure.

In particular, the key objectives of Phase One of the District Boundary Review Study are:

- Gather feedback from the public on the size of Council and its governance structure
- Understand feedback and perceptions of Members of Regional Council who are currently serving, related to their experiences with the current size of Council and its governance structure.

Three components made up the first phase of this research, including:

- Qualitative interviews with all 16 Councillors and the Mayor
- An online public survey distributed to Narrative Research's East Coast Voice panel, as well as a survey accessible through the Municipal website and
- Public input at three Community Council meetings

This "What we Heard" report summarizes all three components.



NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

Key Research Findings

Following the research phases (Qualitative Interviews, online surveys, and public meetings), the following three research findings were derived:



Residents are largely aware of Council’s responsibilities, and feel they know how to reach their councillor if they have a question or issue, and over half feel their councillor is responsive to the needs of their community. Online access to Council and committee meetings increased accessibility and resident participation.



The majority of councillors and over half of the general public feel that the current Council structure (consisting of 16 councillors) is effective in representing residents of the Municipality. In addition, the current governance structure is generally perceived to be effective.



In assessing the five proposed criteria for determining district boundaries (*communities of interest, relative parity of voting power, geography, population density, and number of electors*) all are felt to be of high importance to residents and councillors, and should be considered during the planning phase. That said, slightly less importance is placed on geography by residents, though this opinion is not shared by councillors. Importantly, councillors also believe that number of residents should be considered as opposed to the number of electors.



NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

Qualitative Interviews with the Mayor and Councillors

Background & Objectives

The Halifax Regional Municipality District Boundary Review study is a provincially-mandated initiative that involves each municipality in Nova Scotia reviewing the number of councillors as well as the boundaries for municipal polling districts every 8 years. This study will be used to inform an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) which will make a decision on the size of Council and the polling boundaries within HRM. The first phase of the District Boundary Review included two parts – public consultation and consultation with the Halifax Regional Council.

The key objectives of this part of the research was to understand feedback and perceptions of Members of Regional Council who are currently serving, related to their experiences with the current size of Council and its governance structure.

Methodology



Approach:

Seventeen (17) in-depth telephone interviews were conducted from April 14th to May 4th.



Target Audience:

Participants included:

- All 16 HRM Councillors
- The Mayor



Length

Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.



The primary benefits of qualitative discussions are that they allow for in-depth probing with qualifying participants on their opinions, perceptions and attitudes on a specific subject matter. Qualitative research allows for more complete understanding of the segment in that the thoughts or feelings are expressed in the participants' "own language" and at their "own levels of passion." Qualitative techniques are used in marketing research as a means of developing insight and direction, rather than collecting quantitatively precise data or absolute measures. As such, results are directional only and cannot be projected to the overall population under study.

Councillors and the Mayor were asked for their thoughts on the current governance structure of the Municipality, including the Mayor, 16 councillors, four community councils, six standing committees and various advisory boards, committees and commissions.

All councillors and the Mayor generally indicated that **the current overall governance structure works well as it is**, though a small number of minor comments and suggestions for changes that would benefit the Municipality were noted. For example, there is a desire for increased sharing of details of what is discussed in standing committees with the Council, for a broader understanding of issues. It was felt that at present, communications may indicate *that* an item was discussed, but not the sides of the debate or issue. In addition, some councillors pointed out that community councils may overlap areas and should be reviewed to ensure that there isn't duplication. More commentary on suggestions for change are outlined on subsequent pages of this report.

In terms of what works well within the current governance structure, **community councils are felt to be a strong contributor to good governance**, allowing for community input and debate of issues at the local level. It was felt that including councillors from inside and outside of the community council area in these groups is felt to be a strength to provide alternative views and input.

The number of community and standing committees is generally felt to be appropriate, however a few Councillors commented that it is important for Community Councils to reflect areas with similar issues – ensuring rural areas have representation and their views are not lost, while similarly, suburban areas are well represented by Community Councils, and urban areas as well.

While some feel that **the standing committee structure should be reviewed**, others feel that these committees work well and serve as a forum for focused discussions.

“

“[Community Councils] are advisory to council. So that structure, with recommendations, brings local voice to the larger council. Four community councils is sufficient, I think.”

“The community councils are worth it so that residents can be engaged – their voices are heard.”

“Community councils are meant for district decisions that are not affecting the larger municipality. Decisions about local development should be able to be made at that local level. It's also an opportunity for the public to come to meetings in person or on zoom and feel more intimate with us as a council – speak to us and ask questions. That is a really important feature we should never lose.”

“I enjoy community councils – you're that much closer to hearing from residents. They play a role so that the general public can express their opinions. It's very effective.”

“The structure allows a councillor to sign up for committees that are of interest, and these meetings cut down on the amount we have coming to regional council. It's the right approach. I have no changes.”

Some elements of the current governance structure were felt to require attention. The following suggestions and discussion points were raised by Councillors:

- There should be **more sharing of information about what’s happening on various committees** – now reporting is limited, for example merely noting that an item was discussed, but not indicating the substance of the discussion.
- Some Councillors feel that there are **some overlaps in committees**. For example, the Regional Centre Community Council was felt to overlap the Halifax and West Council, and that potentially for larger projects, they should be addressed by the whole council. Another potential overlap that was noted was the Peninsula Advisory Committee and the Community Planning Committee, which were felt to both look at development.
- There is a general **desire to increase public participation in committee meetings**, and some feel that all meetings within the governance structure should all be accessible both online and in-person to allow for greater accessibility by members of the public.
- Newer councillors indicated that they could benefit from **greater guidance at the start of their terms on how the governance structure works**.
- One Councillor felt that there are currently **too many advisory committees**, such that some have very little work to do, and difficulties in keeping volunteers engaged. Instead, this Councillor suggested consolidation of some of the advisory committees and greater clarity for volunteers on what their roles are.
- Another comment on advisory committees was **that the proceedings for these organizations are unnecessarily formal** – since the committees are not making decisions, formality is felt to be unnecessary and stifles action.

“I’d like to see more sharing of information about what’s happening on various committee meetings – a head’s up on subjects to be covered, and more communication to non-committee members on the details of topics.”

“There should be a hybrid model of how all meetings can be attended. It’s safer and easier for some people to attend meetings virtually.”

“I find sometimes there is significant information that happens in standing committees that I am paying more attention to now. Early on there was no one to draw your attention to the information before it came to council. A lot of foundational information happens in the standing committees. It’s important to watch that. For any new councillor – if it’s something specific to your district that happens in standing committee, it would be important for councillors to get a heads up on that. Could be solved administratively as a head’s up.”

“We should review the community council areas – there is some apparent duplication of the regional centre and Halifax and West.”

When asked if having 16 Councillors is an appropriate number to represent HRM’s residents, **Councillors and the Mayor generally agreed that the current number – 16 – is appropriate.** That said, determining the ideal number of Councillors for the region is a complex issue.

Some Councillors commented that **a larger council could be unwieldy** in terms of allowing all to participate and speak in meetings. That said, Councillors also recognize that HRM’s large geographic size and diverse types of communities (from rural to suburban to urban), coupled with the fact that the region is growing in diversity and population is causing additional strain on councillors’ abilities to adequately serve their districts, such that **additional districts may be necessary going forward.**

Nearly all felt that Council should either stay the same size, or be increased by one or two, or as many as four, councillors, ideally. No one suggested a council larger than 20, and no one suggested a council smaller than 13 – 14.

Those who would like to see it increased indicated that this would be helpful to ensure that the areas that are rapidly growing have adequate representation, and to ensure better division of districts by common interests and concerns.

Many felt that in order to continue to represent residents well, that **additional administrative support is needed for councillors.** This issue was often brought to light by bringing forth comparisons to provincial districts (which are smaller) and the comparative amount of staff support and office infrastructure that MLAs currently have.



“We need a couple more [councillors] to spread out the work, to more evenly distribute the representation. Halifax has grown so much in the last five years.”

“I think it’s about right. I wouldn’t want to see it reduced. We are growing. Maybe we need one more councillor, with 10,000 people more a year.”

“The difficulty with HRM is that our geography is so large and often so rural. All communities need to be seen and heard. The combination of population base and geography makes me want to say maybe we could use one or two more. I definitely don’t think less.”

“I feel that it’s now a good balance. Not too few that some views are not represented, and not too much that you can’t have a dynamic discussion.”

“The average councillor represents almost two average MLA’s districts. It just emphasizes how much bigger a councillor’s district is compared with an MLA, and councillors don’t have the support and staff the way an MLA or MP has.”

“There is a lot of extra work when there is growth – more building permits, new residents with new needs. Growth generates work.”

“Our districts are growing. The resources needed to fully support residents is what is needed. There needs to be a focus on supporting councillors.”

Councillors were reminded that each district now includes between 20,000 and 31,000 residents, and asked for their thoughts on those numbers, and how well they feel able to represent those living in their district. Generally, **Councillors feel that they are able to adequately represent the number of residents in their district**, though most felt that the number of residents per councillor should not increase. Many councillors indicated that the diversity of issues, geographies and resident needs can be challenging. Some councillors represent large numbers of communities (as many as 42) within their district, with diverse needs and a wide range of demographics, while other districts are more uniform in the type of community and needs. As such, Councillors discussed how **the raw number of residents is not the only factor in being able to represent a district, but that the diversity of needs and issues, as well as the number of different types of communities should also be considered.**

The ability to serve residents of a district was felt to have increased for some Councillors during the pandemic, due to new ways of attending meetings online and reaching out to residents who are now more adept at virtual communications. That said, geographically large districts still clearly pose a challenge for some Councillors, who cited long travel times to visit various parts of their constituencies.

As to the ability to represent electors or residents, all Councillors felt **that the number of residents should be the key consideration rather than number of electors**, given that children, newcomers, and even electors who don't vote all need to be represented at Council.

Accessibility would be increased, many thought, by having **increased administrative support**, as many Councillors reported that there have been increased communications from residents in their districts during the pandemic. Indeed, as populations grow and needs become more complex, Councillors are concerned about their ability to be responsive to the needs of residents.



“Around 20,000 residents is a doable number. That said, there are more active districts compared with others and that makes a big difference.”

“Where we are now with numbers does work fairly well, but it does stretch the job with only one councillor and half a staff person for administrative support. It is difficult to deal with the volume of correspondence. Either add more administrative help and support or shrinking the size [of the district] would be beneficial.”

“Number of residents should be the determining factor not electors. Everyone pays taxes and contributes. You have to represent all those who live in your area.”

“The current number is appropriate. I struggle less with the number and more with the geography to be able to represent residents well... I would not go higher than 31,000 and be able to do the job well.”

“Not all districts are the same. Some have a high percentage of new Canadians with unique needs. Others in rural areas have lots of complaints, but different than bus or other issues in urban areas. I think around 22 to 24,000 is a sweet spot where you can be responsive.”



Councillors were reminded of the five criteria the NSUARB has indicated must be considered when determining the number and boundary of districts, including geography, number of electors, communities of interest, population density and relative parity of voting, and asked to indicate which of those five criteria they felt were most important, and why.

It is important to note that Councillors indicated that the five criteria should be more clearly defined as there is currently room for interpretation of the criteria, particularly with communities of interest being a broad term open to various readings. That said, results show that **communities of interest** was felt to be the most important determining criteria among the five listed, primarily because many Councillors feel that individual communities have common needs, and that those needs can be better represented when those residents know which district they live in and have a single advocate or Councillor to represent them. On a related note, many felt that **common areas of interest** (e.g. suburban/urban vs. rural) should be a new consideration, given that rural areas often have different issues and concerns compared with suburban and rural areas. For example, well water concerns versus those with sewers. That said, some felt that considering communities of interest can contribute to isolation and lack of inclusion, and that by having multiple types of communities within a district, a Councillor can better understand the diversity of issues within the Municipality. However, overall, as Councillors grappled with the various criteria, it became clear that the ability to advocate for a district hinges in part on that district having some commonality of interest. **Geography** was felt to play a key role in these considerations as well, both in terms of dividing districts by natural geographies and historic communities, but also in terms of ensuring that a district is not too geographically large as to prohibit ease of visitation for a Councillor across the communities within a single district.

Some Councillors pointed out that the **number of electors and parity of voting** are very inter-related criteria, and that ultimately it is important to ensure that, within a margin or variance, each district has a relatively similar number of people. That said, Councillors were very clear in indicating that the number of residents should be the criteria, not number of electors.

Some felt that **population density** is a key criteria given that this can play a large role in defining services such as access to recreation, green spaces, as well as transportation considerations, though overall, density was felt to be less of a priority in determining district division compared with the other four criteria.

“To rank them... I’d say community of interest first – I think given the size and history of HRM - we are an amalgamation. Community of interest can bring people together and push them apart. If you could push the boundaries a street or two it would make more sense around organizing community views. Keeping communities as whole as possible. Then geography, then parity of electors. I’d prefer to keep districts as close as possible to the number of electors. Within a thousand or two.”

“Ultimately we should not split communities. Try to keep a community within one district, unlike now.”

“Geography is important – a councillor needs the ability to comfortably visit all areas of their district. It’s important to be on the ground in the community – you then notice when things are not right.”

“It should not be number of electors. Number of residents is far more important... To be fair, we need to consider all of those who are not yet electors. They still need to be considered in making up a district.”

“Population density is critical. We should define access to services related to population density. If you add more than a thousand people to an area, we should be required to add green space and facilities. We should be able to add communities without sidewalks, schools, green space – the things that permit social connections.”

“Geography is very important to me. The boundary can split neighbourhoods, and it’s hard on residents and hard for a councillor to achieve goals of a community when it is split. I’m less concerned with communities of interest if it’s around language and culture. For me, the more important part is geography – not carving up neighbourhoods if we don’t have to.”

“Parity of voting is a reasonable way to go in general. Not only for the weight of the vote but the role of councillors to be successful at participating and advocating for a relatively equal number of people.”

“Number of electors is close to parity of voters. Communities of interest and geography... so long as communities of interest are not split. That doesn’t mean absolutely parity, but if you allow 5 – 10% variance in the number of residents, then you can make allowances around communities of interest. Prevents splitting up pockets.”

“Should definitely consider whether a district is urban, rural or suburban. Rural requires a special kind of attention and so do urban residents.”

Councillors were asked if there were any other criteria that should be considered, outside of the five named NSUARB criteria.

Many councillors feel that **representation of key groups, namely those that have been historically underrepresented**, should be considered. Indeed, many Councillors feel that the possibility of having designated African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq and/or indigenous populations should be further investigated to ensure that these populations have a voice and feel represented by Council.

Other considerations included whether a district includes a **mix of rural and urban**, or whether that becomes a criteria to divide districts. Some Councillors indicated that they would like to see separation of districts on this basis, while others argued that districts should contain a mix of rural and urban.

Population growth was another criterion that was mentioned as new potential consideration, given that growth can add complexity and a unique set of needs for any district.



“We need to make sure that populations who have been historically underrepresented are represented. They looked at that at the provincial level. I think we should have districts that are majority African Nova Scotian residents, as opposed to districts that have large black populations but are outnumbered by others.”

“Communities of interest raises the issue of whether we need to have a seat for African Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq. I don't think that our council necessarily needs a designated seat, but it should investigate the issue, look at advocate seats – people who are elected and have a say on issues and can speak on issues like housing, environment etc. It would be interesting to see us do something like that. It would be good to see how we can continue to try to ensure that all people are represented.”

“There is a challenge as districts get bigger that communities – like our black communities - have a representative in the room. We've never had a Mi'kmaq representative. Do we have to have a special representative like the MLAs have? I don't know. That's the one thing that comes to mind that is a bit of a struggle. I wouldn't say no to taking a look. We'd have to have more discussion about it.”

“There should be a fair representation of rural, suburban and urban. Now it pits urban against rural, and that is not effective. What happens is that because of the way it's divided, if you have urban and suburban councillors, and there is an urban project, you have a rural urban divide. But if you had everyone representing both urban and rural, it wouldn't be so divided. You'd see better decisions being made.”

“We need to think about suburban and rural vs urban. Should a district have all three or just urban / suburban / rural. Because needs are very different. It could be based on service – if you're on water and sewer. That should be a consideration.”



NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

Online Survey Results – General Public / Resident Survey

Approach:

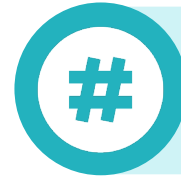


In March 2022, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) commissioned Narrative Research to conduct the first phase of Halifax Regional Council District Boundary study. To gather public opinion, an online study was conducted. The survey was publicly-available on HRM’s website for all members of the public to complete and concurrently, the survey was sent to members of Narrative Research’s *East Coast Voice* online panel, to ensure a minimum level of survey completions were achieved across a representative sample of residents.

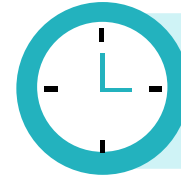
In addition, members of the public were invited to provide feedback at various Community Council meetings.



- Online survey with **residents of HRM**, aged 14+ years



- 1,199 surveys completed, with 766 from the General Population and 433 from the Gen Pop Panel (Narrative Research’s East Coast Voice Panel)



- Average survey length: 16 minutes



- *Gen Pop Panel* data collection dates:
April 7-12, 2022
- *General Population* data collection dates:
April 6-25, 2022



As a non-probability sample (i.e., a panel sample where residents have joined a panel to share their opinions), and in accordance with CRIC Public Opinion Research Standards, a margin of error is not applied. A demographic profile of respondents can be found on page 53 of this report.



NARRATIVE
RESEARCH

Views of Representation

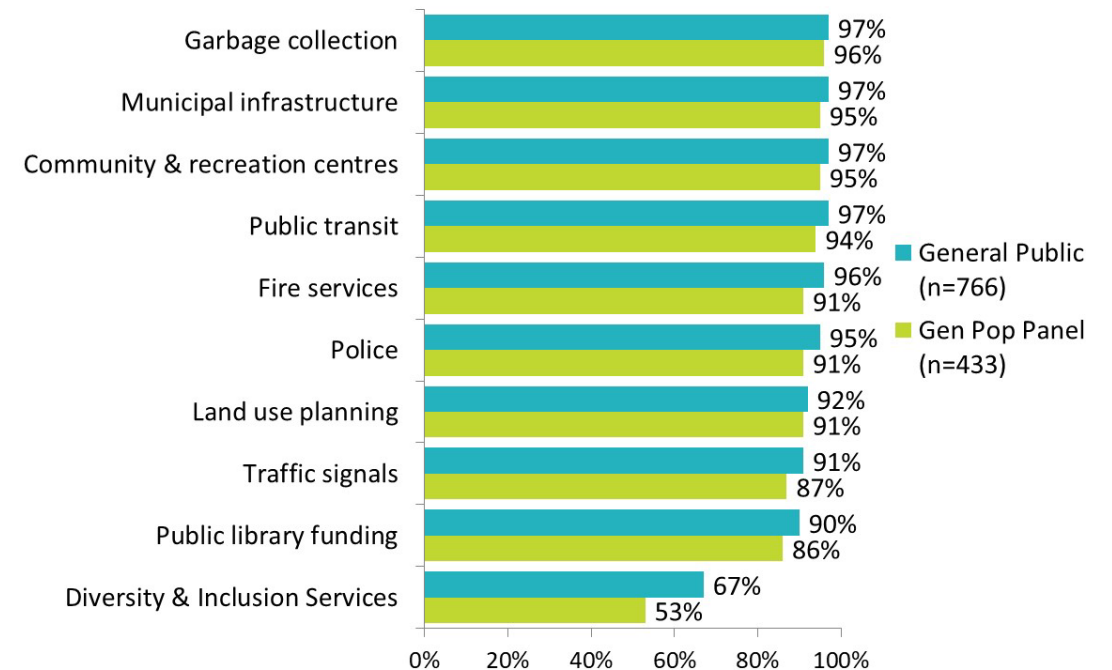
Nearly all respondents are aware of the majority of Halifax Regional Council's responsibilities.

Overall, most respondents in both groups are aware of the wide range of responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council. However, the largest disparity in awareness appears in Diversity & Inclusion Services, where two-thirds of residents in the General Public are aware of this responsibility while a little over half of the Gen Pop Panel express the same sentiment.

Among the general population panelists, those who have lived in the HRM for less than 15 years are *less likely* to be aware of Diversity & Inclusion Services as a responsibility of the Halifax Regional Council, while those who are eligible to vote in municipal elections are much more likely to be aware of Diversity & Inclusion Services compared to those who are not.

Awareness of Halifax Regional Council's Responsibilities

% Saying "Yes, I Was Aware"



Q.A1: Prior to today, were you aware that Halifax Regional Council is responsible for the following?



For the most part, residents are aware of who their councillor is, with few exceptions.

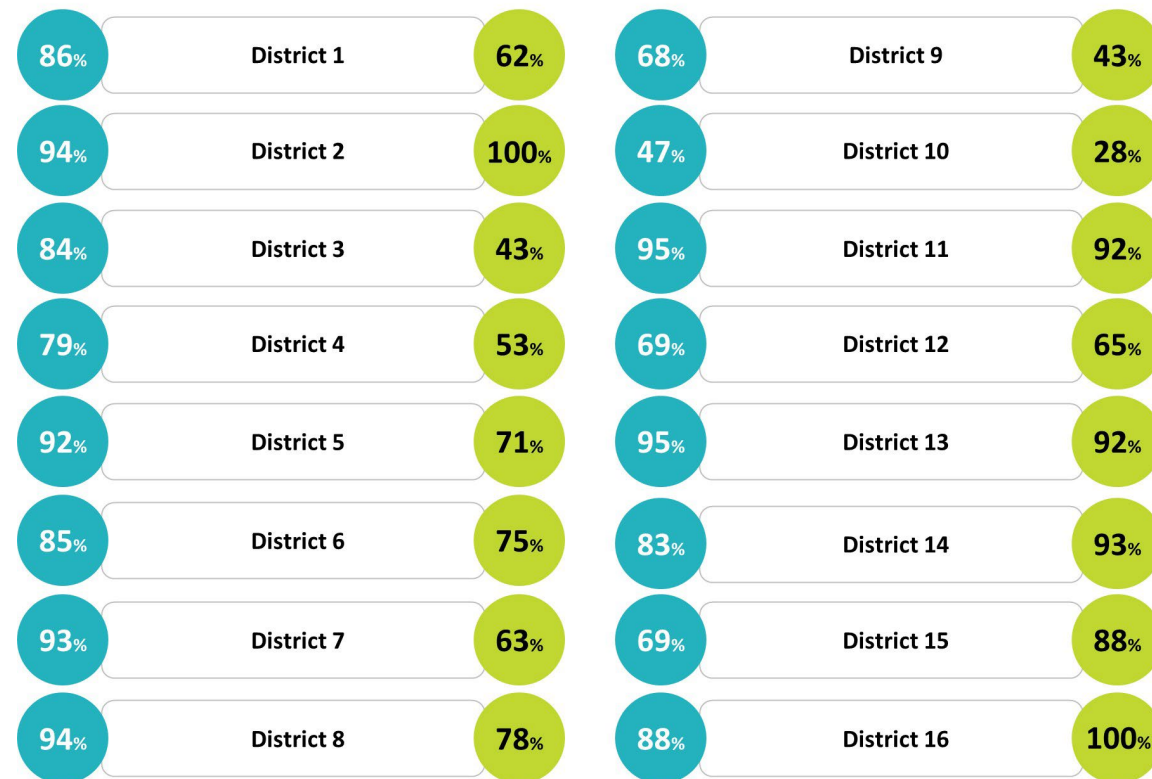
Generally, the majority of residents are aware of who their councillor is. However, fewer than half of Gen Pop Panel residents in Districts 3, 9, and 10 correctly identified their councillor. This is likely due to confusion between the exact boundaries in neighboring districts. However, it appears this is not the case for the lower level of recognition in District 9 (43%), where a considerable proportion of residents (30%) indicated they are not sure who their councillor is (rather than identifying an incorrect councillor).

Results from the Gen Pop Panel show that responses from residents in District 3 were nearly split between Councillor Becky Kent (43%) and Councillor Sam Austin (38%), who represents the bordering District 5. Similarly, 28 percent of residents in District 10 correctly identified Councillor Kathryn Morse while 23 percent believe Councillor Tim Outhit of District 16 is their representative.

Moreover, the apparent confusion between District 10 and District 16 councillors appears in the General Public responses as well.

Correct Identification of Councillor by District

General Public n=744, Gen Pop Panel n=433



Q.A5: Without looking it up, who is your councillor?

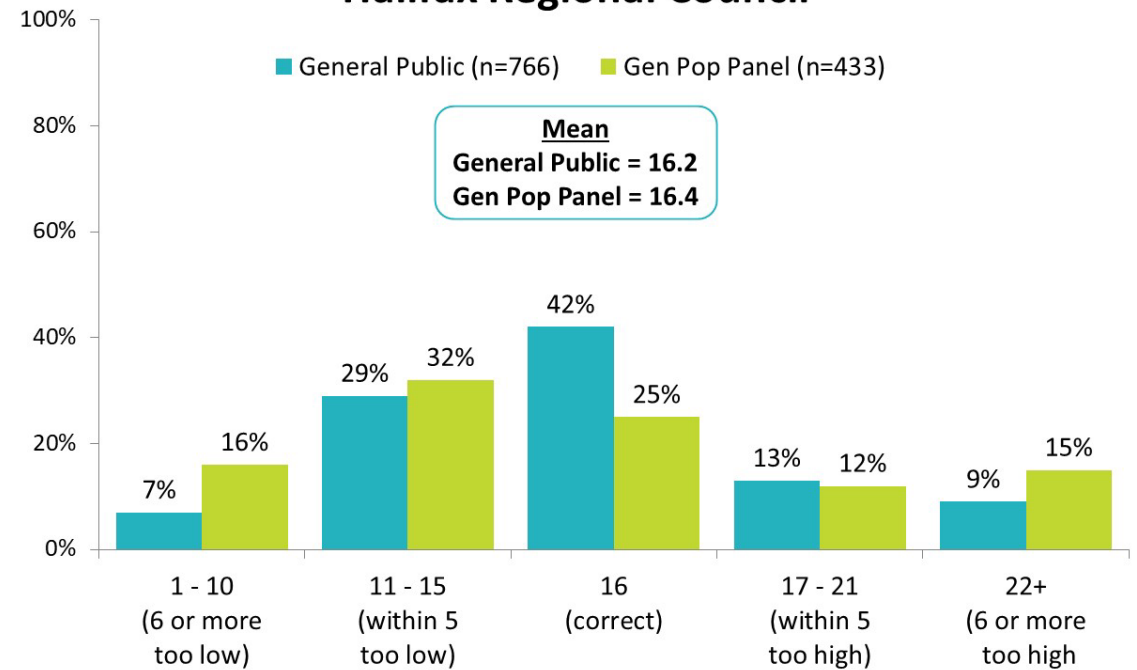
Residents are more likely to believe that the number of councillors who make up the Halifax Regional Council is 16 or fewer.

When asked, unaided, to provide a number, most residents believe the number of councillors that make up the Halifax Regional Council is either 16 or fewer. Perhaps unsurprising, given they may be more engaged than the average resident, more individuals from the General Public survey provided the correct answer of 16 (42%), compared to just a quarter of the more representative sample from the Gen Pop Panel.

Respondents who are eligible to vote, those who have contacted their councillor, and those who have attended council/committee meetings are more likely to know the correct number of councillors, perhaps reflective of greater municipal engagement. The likelihood of offering the correct answer also increases with age, perhaps speaking to the inclination among younger residents to be less engaged with local government.

Gen Pop Panel responses ranged from 1 to 233 (1 response of 233, 1 of 60), while General Public responses ranged from 1 to 999 (2 responses of 999, 1 of 130, 1 of 60). Responses over 200 were excluded from mean scores.

Number of Councillors Who Make Up Halifax Regional Council



Q.A2: To the best of your knowledge, how many municipal councillors make up the Halifax Regional Council?
 Note: Responses over 200 were excluded from the mean calculations for the general public and gen pop panel.



Views on Current Number of Councillors

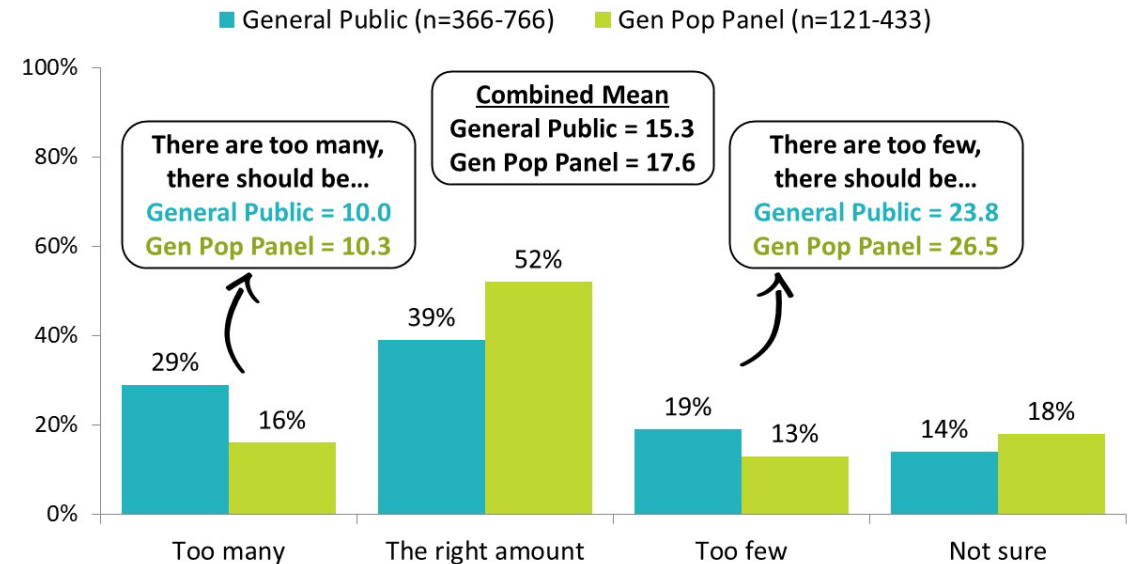
When provided with the current number of councillors, half of residents agree that it is the right amount to have on the Council. Among those who believe there are too many or too few, the combined average suggested number of councillors remains close to 16.

When told the correct number of councillors, half of residents agree that 16 is the *right amount*. Second to this are the number of residents who view the current number of councillors as *too many*. Meanwhile, smaller numbers of residents either indicated they believe there are currently *too few* councillors or were *not sure*.

The average suggested number of councillors among those who believe there are currently *too many* is around 10 for both groups. Meanwhile, the average suggestion among those who believe there are *too few* sits at 23.8 among General Public respondents, and 26.5 among Gen Pop Panel respondents. The combined means within both audience groups, however, does not deviate far from the current number of 16 councillors.

Gen Pop Panel responses on the suggested number of councillors ranged from 4 to 100, while General Public responses ranged from 1 to 999 (1 response of 999, 1 of 440, 2 of 100). Mean calculations exclude responses higher than 150.

Best Representation of Current Number of Councillors



Q.B1: As you may be aware, the Halifax Regional Council currently includes 16 councillors and the mayor, who collectively serve approximately 440,000 residents. Based on what you know or have heard, which best represents your view on the current number of councillors? / Q.B2: [IF 'TOO MANY' OR 'TOO FEW' IN Q.B1] How many councillors do you think there should be to represent the Halifax Regional Municipality's population of approximately 440,000?

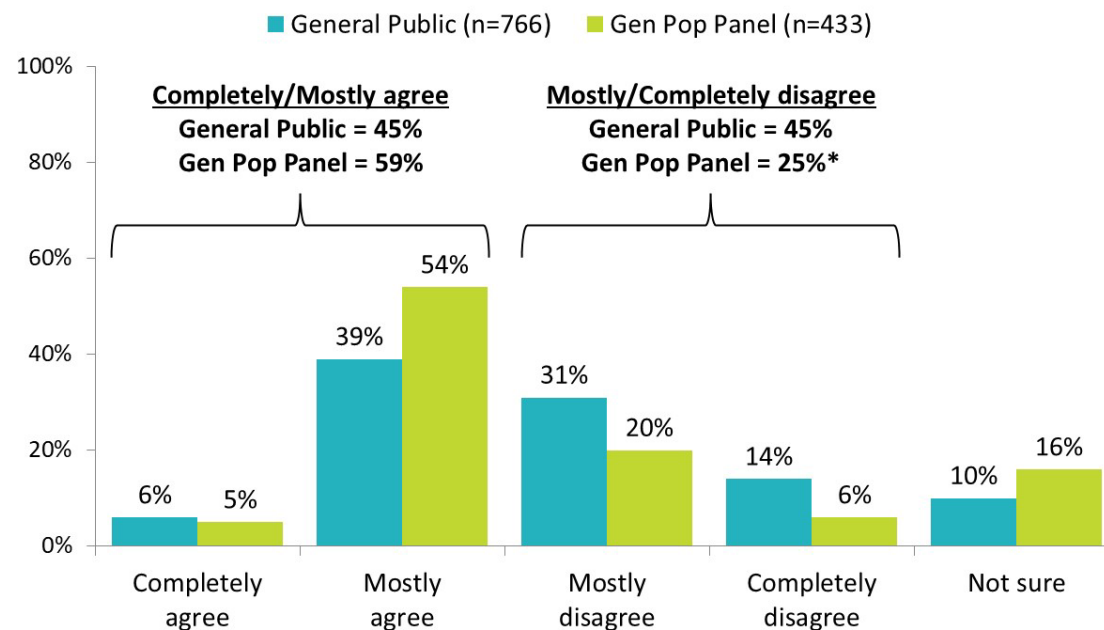
Note: General public mean calculation excludes responses higher than 150.

Residents are more likely to agree than disagree that the Halifax Regional Council adequately represents residents.

Most residents (from the general population panel survey) agree that the current structure of Council, with its 16 Councillors, adequately represents residents. Importantly, however, results vary by audience, with those of the general public (accessing the survey through the HRM Website) expressing equal proportions agreeing and disagreeing in this regard.

Agreement is higher among those eligible to vote, home owners, and those who have lived in HRM for 15 or more years.

Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents



Q.B3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that Halifax Regional Council – with its 16 councillors – adequately represents residents? *Due to rounding.



Agreement on Adequate Representation

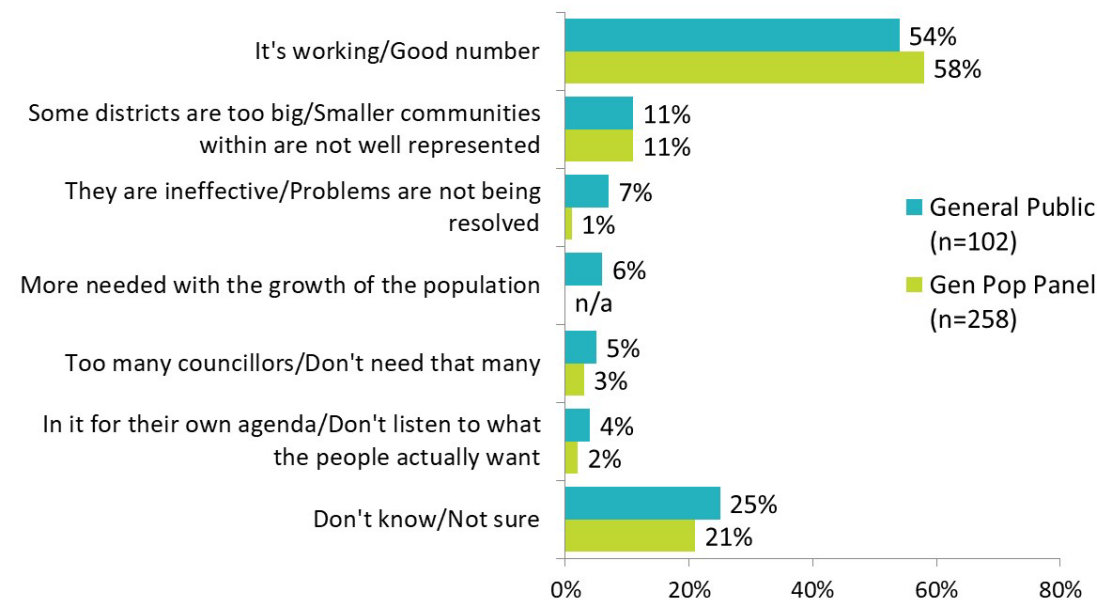
Those agreeing the Halifax Regional Council adequately represents residents state that the council is functioning properly and has a good number of councillors.

Slightly over one-half of respondents who *agree* that the Halifax Regional Council adequately represents residents reason that *it's working/is a good number of councillors*, with few providing any other reason.

Of note, some, including those who are in complete agreement, provide criticisms of the Council, stating things like *some districts are too big and smaller communities within are not well represented* among others.

Agreement That Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents

Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Completely/Mostly Agree



Q.B4: Why do you [AGREE] that Halifax Regional Council – with its 16 councillors – adequately represents residents?
Note: 200 random General Public responses to Q.B2 were selected for coding.



Disagreement on Adequate Representation

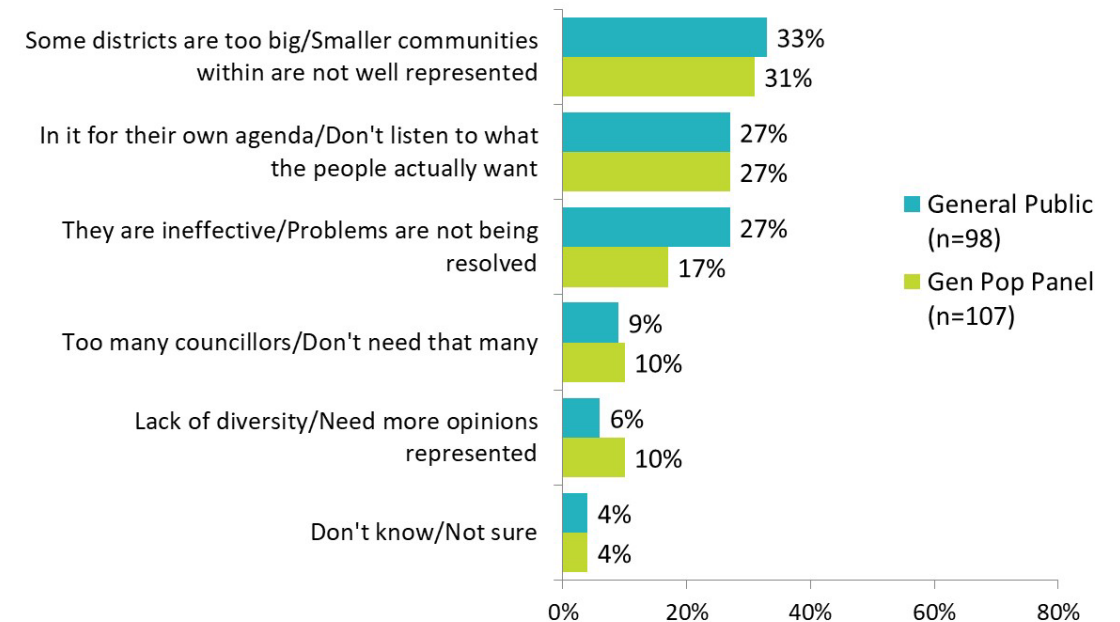
Those disagreeing that the Council adequately represents residents hold this opinion for three key reasons: that some districts are too big, the Council does not listen to the people, and general perceptions of inefficacy.

Other reasons, including the perception there are *too many councillors*, and the Council *lacks diversity*, are each held by a small proportion.

These opinions are also similar to the critique provided by those who *agree* that the Halifax Regional Council adequately represents residents.

Disagreement That Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents

Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Mostly/Completely Disagree



Q.B4: Why do you [DISAGREE] that Halifax Regional Council – with its 16 councillors – adequately represents residents?



Number of Councillors Relative to Residents

Respondents were provided a list of comparative municipalities in Canada to provide reference on the number of districts relative to the number of residents in those districts, as shown below.

Halifax Regional Municipality has approximately 440,000 residents and 16 councillors/ districts. Here are some comparably sized municipalities and cities in Canada along with the number of districts they currently have.

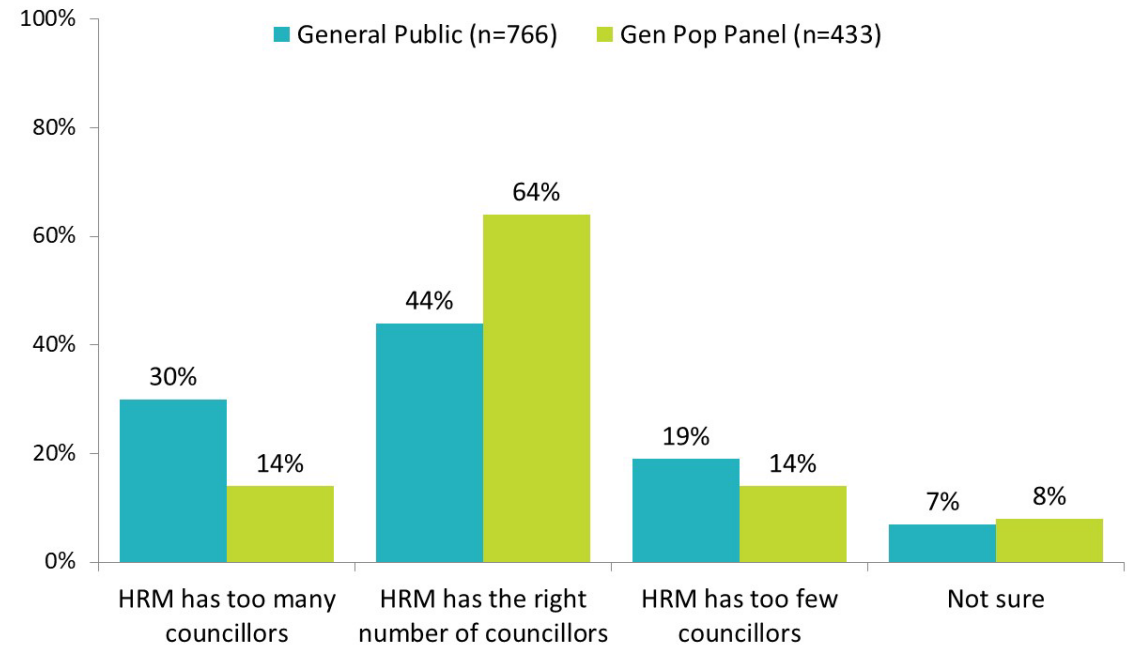
Municipality	Population (2021)	Number of Districts	Number of Residents per District
Winnipeg	749,607	15	49,974
Hamilton	568,353	15	37,890
Quebec City	549,459	21	26,165
Halifax	439,819	16	27,489
Laval	438,366	21	20,874
London	422,324	14	30,166
Gatineau	291,041	19	15,318
Saskatoon	266,141	10	26,614

When provided examples of comparable municipalities, a majority feel that HRM has the right number of councillors.

When provided with examples of the number of districts and ratio of councillors to residents in other Canadian municipalities, the majority of residents agree that HRM has the *right number of councillors* relative to its residents. However, this sentiment is more pronounced in the Gen Pop Panel as opposed to responses from the General Public, the latter of which is skewed more strongly to the opinion of over-governance with three in ten believing that HRM has *too many councillors*.

Meanwhile, up to two in ten respondents view the HRM as having *too few councillors*, while a smaller number are *not sure*.

Best Representation of the Number of Councillors Relative to Residents in HRM



Q.C3: Seeing these comparisons, which best represents your view on ratio, or the number of councillors relative to residents in HRM?



Of those how believe there are currently too many or too few councillors, a range of suggestions are provided, with averages ending up close to the current number of councillors.

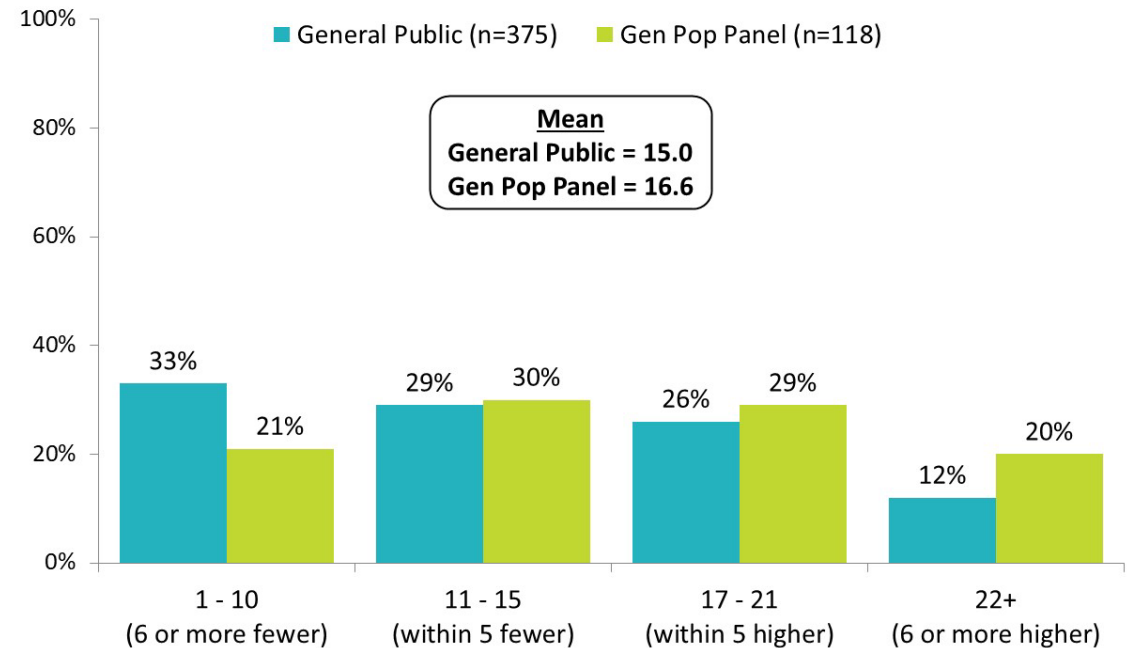
In general, a small majority of respondents made suggestions of fewer than 16 when asked how many councillors there should be in HRM.

Similar to results when residents were provided with the number of councillors in the HRM and asked to comment how many they believe there should be, there remains a relatively even distribution of suggestions among respondents who believe HRM has too few or too many Councillors. Residents in the Gen Pop Panel tend to favor more than 16 councillors on average, while those in the General Public tend to favor less than 16. Compared to results prior to getting comparators, the average suggestions for the number of councillors following the comparators being provided has slightly decreased among both audiences.

Gen Pop Panel responses range from 4 to 50, while General Public responses range from 1 to 440 (1 response of 440, 1 of 100, 1 of 50). Mean calculations exclude responses higher than 150.

How Many Councillors Should There Be in HRM

Among Those Who Believe HRM Has Too Many Councillors or Too Few Councillors



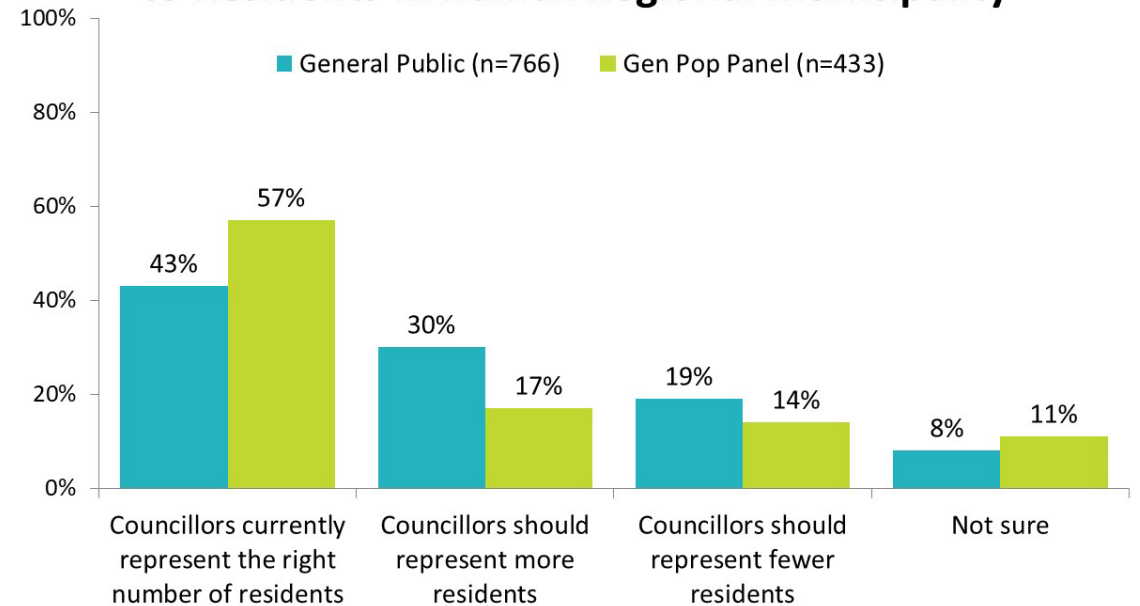
Q.C4: [IF 'TOO MANY COUNCILLORS' OR 'TOO FEW COUNCILLORS' IN Q.C3] How many councillors do you think there should be in HRM? *Note: General public mean calculation excludes responses higher than 150.*

A majority of residents are satisfied with the current proportion of councillors to residents.

When provided with a range of residents that each councillor on the Halifax Regional Council typically represents (between 20,000 and 31,000), the majority of respondents stated that *councillors currently represent the right amount of residents*. This sentiment is strongest amongst residents in the Gen Pop Panel, while fewer respondents in the General Public believe the right number of residents are represented by each councillor. Accordingly, three in ten General Public respondents believe *councillors should represent more residents*, which relates to the previous findings of this group’s tendency to view the Halifax Regional Council as having *too many councillors* (Table C3).

A minority of residents in both groups believe *councillors should represent fewer residents*, and about one in ten are *not sure*.

Opinion of Statements About Proportion of Councillors to Residents in Halifax Regional Municipality



Q.C5a: Currently, councillors on Halifax Regional Council each represent a range of 20,000 to 31,000 residents. (Note: Residents includes all those living within a district, not just those who are eligible to vote). Which one of the following statements best represents your thoughts about the proportion of councillors to residents in Halifax Regional Municipality? Should each councillor represent more or fewer residents?

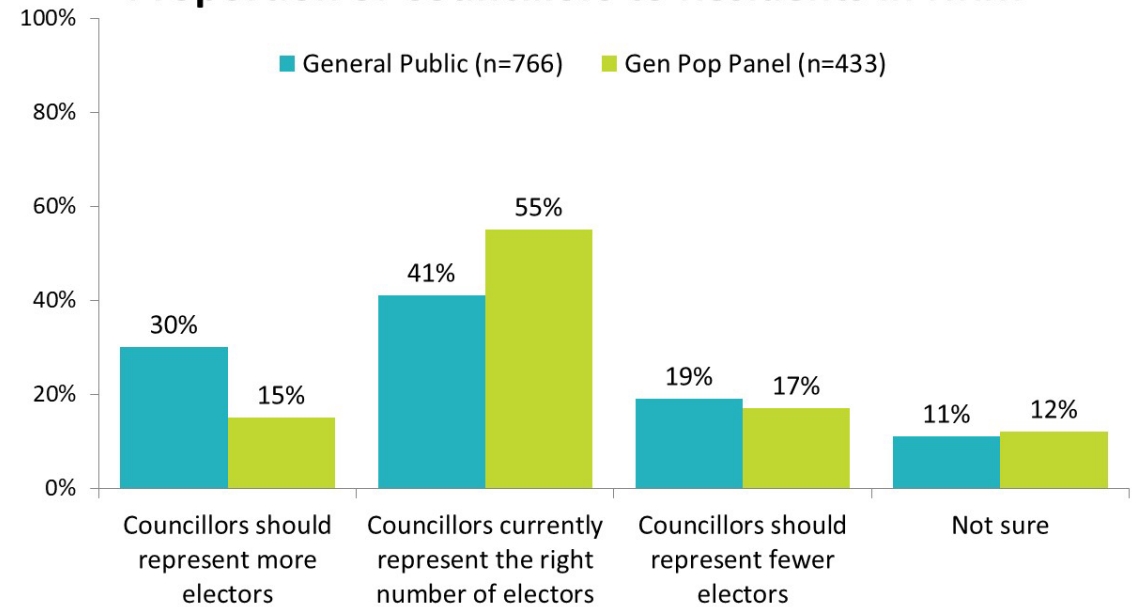
After being informed on the ratio of MLA representatives to electors in the provincial government, more than half continue to believe councillors currently represent the right number of electors.

When shown the ratio of representatives to electors in the Provincial government, respondents maintain their views on their preferred proportion of councillors to residents in the HRM. The majority of residents in both groups believe that *councillors currently represent the right number of electors*. Following the same trend as being given comparators to other municipalities in Canada, more respondents in the General Public state that *councillors should represent more electors* compared to those who believe *councillors should represent fewer electors*.

Meanwhile, information on the representation of electors within the Provincial government did not encourage opinion among one in ten respondents, who stated they are *not sure*.

Description Provided: Councillors on Halifax Regional Council each represent an average of 22,000 electors (those who are eligible to vote – to see more detail about what this means, see this link: <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/elections/information-voters>). By comparison, Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia (the Provincial Government) represent approximately 14,000 electors on average, across the province.

Statement Which Best Represents Thoughts About Proportion of Councillors to Residents in HRM

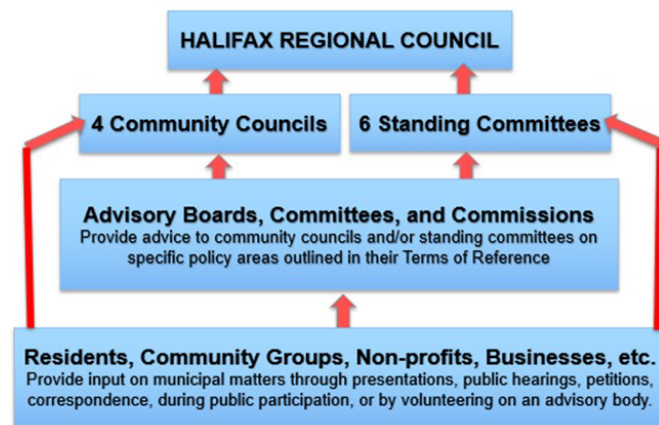


Q.C5b: Based on the information about the responsibilities of the Municipality outlined above, and your knowledge of the role of the Provincial government, which one of the following statements best represents your thoughts about the proportion of councillors to residents in Halifax Regional Municipality? Should each councillor represent more or fewer electors?

Respondents were provided information on the current governance structure of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Here is a broad overview of how Halifax Regional Municipality is governed, which includes not only **the Halifax Regional Council with its 16 councillors and the Mayor**, but also:

- **Four community councils**, that include existing councillors (Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council, Halifax and West Community Council, North West Community Council, Regional Centre Community Council),
- **Six standing committees**, that include existing councillors (Appeals, Audit & Finance, Community Planning and Economic Development, Environment & Sustainability, Executive and Transportation), and
- Various Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions, which include both members of Council and residents.

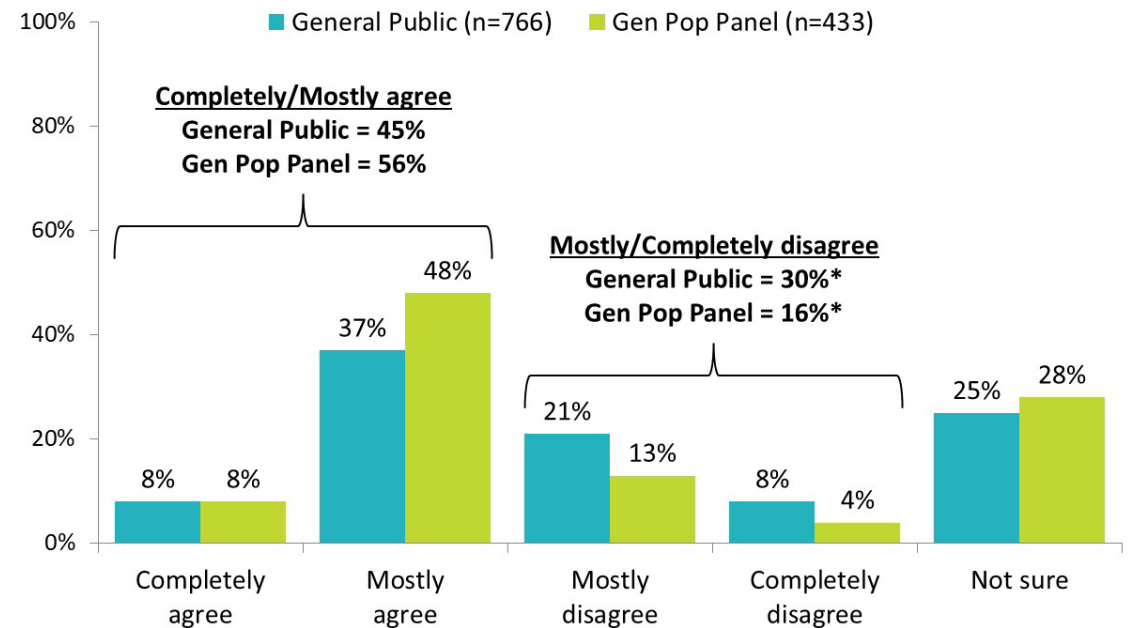


Following this description of the current governance structure, a small majority agree it adequately represents residents.

When shown the description of the current governance structure of the Municipality, approximately half of residents agree that the structure adequately represents residents. That said, a significant minority of residents indicated they are unsure if the current structure of governance provides adequate representation for residents. These residents could have likely been previously unaware of boards and committees and thus were unable to comment on the performance of these aspects of the Halifax Regional Council.

Results differ across the general public (who accessed the survey through the HRM website) and the panelists, whereby agreement is more mixed among members of the general public with three in ten disagreeing with the current governance structure.

Current Structure of Governance Can Adequately Represent Residents



Q.C1: With this additional information, to what extent do you agree or disagree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents? *Due to rounding.



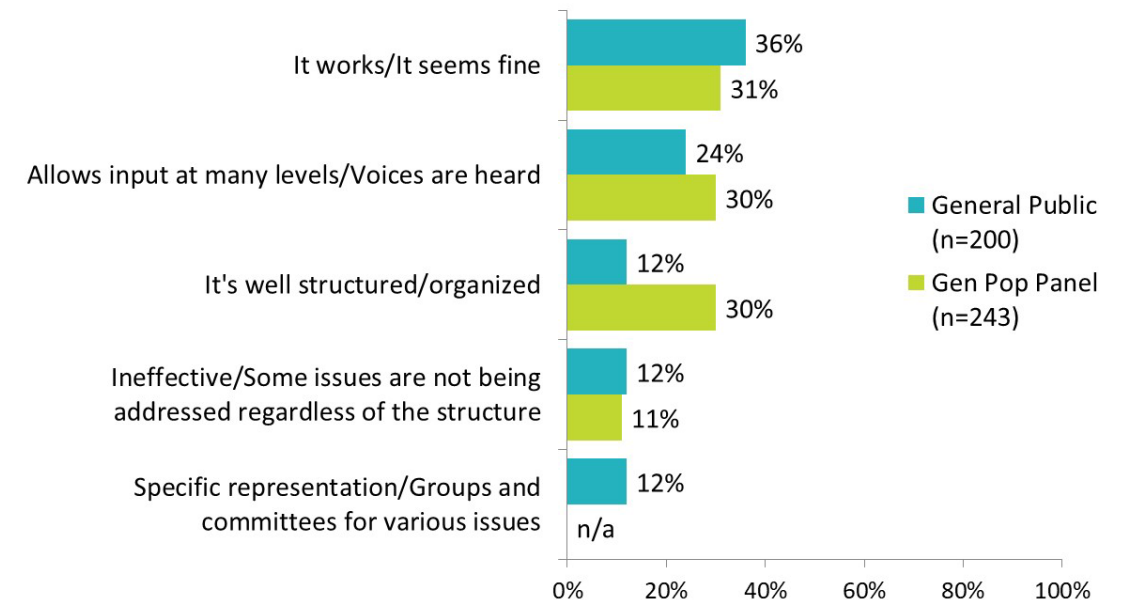
Residents agree that the current structure of governance provides adequate representation based on perceptions it is working, allows input at many levels, and is well-organized.

When asked why they agreed that the structure works to represent residents, respondents offered general reasons that it is working or seems fine, along with more specific reasons including that it *allows input at many levels and many voices to be heard*, or that *it is well structured and organized*.

However, despite their general agreement that residents are adequately represented, some respondents raised issues with the performance of the Halifax Regional Council. One in ten believe that the Council, regardless of its structure, is *ineffective/not addressing issues*. A similar proportion of respondents – which only appeared among those in the General Public – also believe that there is a lack of *specific representation/groups and committees for various issues*.

Agreement That Current Structure of Governance Adequately Represents Residents

Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Completely/Mostly Agree



Q.C2a: [IF 'COMPLETELY AGREE' OR 'MOSTLY AGREE' IN Q.C1] Why do you agree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents? *Note: 200 random General Public responses were selected for coding.*



Disagreement on Current Structure

Disagreement on whether the current structure of governance adequately represents residents is due to a perceived lack of results and perceptions of inefficient processes.

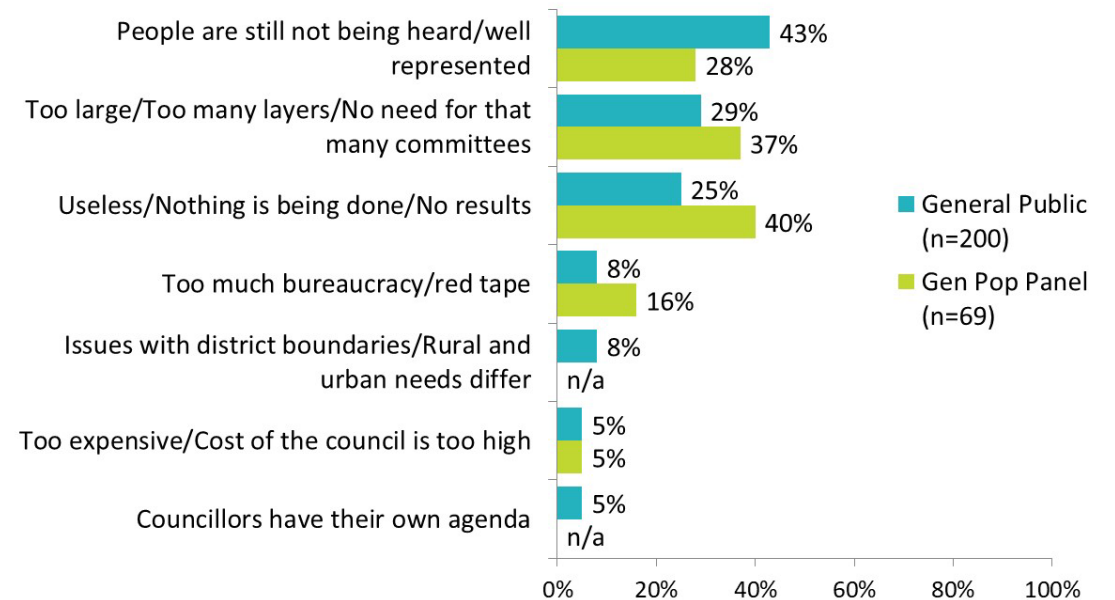
Respondents who *disagree* that the current structure of governance adequately represents residents appear to assume this stance due to perceptions of inaction and inefficiencies. As such, the majority of responses in both groups are distributed among the following reasons: *people are still not being heard/well represented, too large/too many layers/no need for that many committees*, and *useless/nothing being done/no results*.

Following the trend of critiquing the Council’s efficiencies, a smaller proportion of respondents also mention *too much bureaucracy/red tape* as a barrier to adequate representation of residents.

Some residents are also not content with how districts are carved out, mentioning *issues with district boundaries, and that rural and urban needs differ*. Meanwhile, a handful of residents believe that the *cost of council being too high* and *councillors having their own agenda* are factors that hinder adequate representation of residents.

Disagreement That Current Structure of Governance Adequately Represents Residents

Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Mostly/Completely Disagree



Q.C2b: [IF ‘MOSTLY DISAGREE’ OR ‘COMPLETELY DISAGREE’ IN Q.C1] Why do you disagree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents? *Note: 200 random General Public responses were selected for coding.*



NARRATIVE
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Determining Districts

When asked how important each criteria is in deciding how districts are determined within the Halifax Regional Municipality, respondents were provided with the following definitions:

- a. **Geography** (that is, districts are defined by the geographic features and geographic size of each district)
- b. **Number of electors** (that is, how many electors each councillor represents)

Who can vote in Municipal Elections?

You qualify to vote if you meet all of the following conditions:

- You are 18 years of age or older and a Canadian citizen on the first advance polling day
- You have been ordinarily resident in Nova Scotia for 6 months immediately before the first advance polling day
- You are ordinarily resident in the Halifax Regional Municipality and have been so since immediately before the first advance polling day
- You are not otherwise disqualified to vote in the Municipal and School Board Elections.

- a. **Communities of Interest** (that is, districts are defined by things such as: existing communities, historical connections, recreational issues, tax and area rates, water and sewer boundaries, traffic infrastructure and patterns, planning boundaries, school districts, shopping patterns and business centres, language, and ethnic origin)
- b. **Population Density** (that is, districts are defined by the number of people per square kilometre living in a district)
- c. **Relative parity of voting power** (that is, all districts have roughly the same number of electors so that each vote carries the same weight)

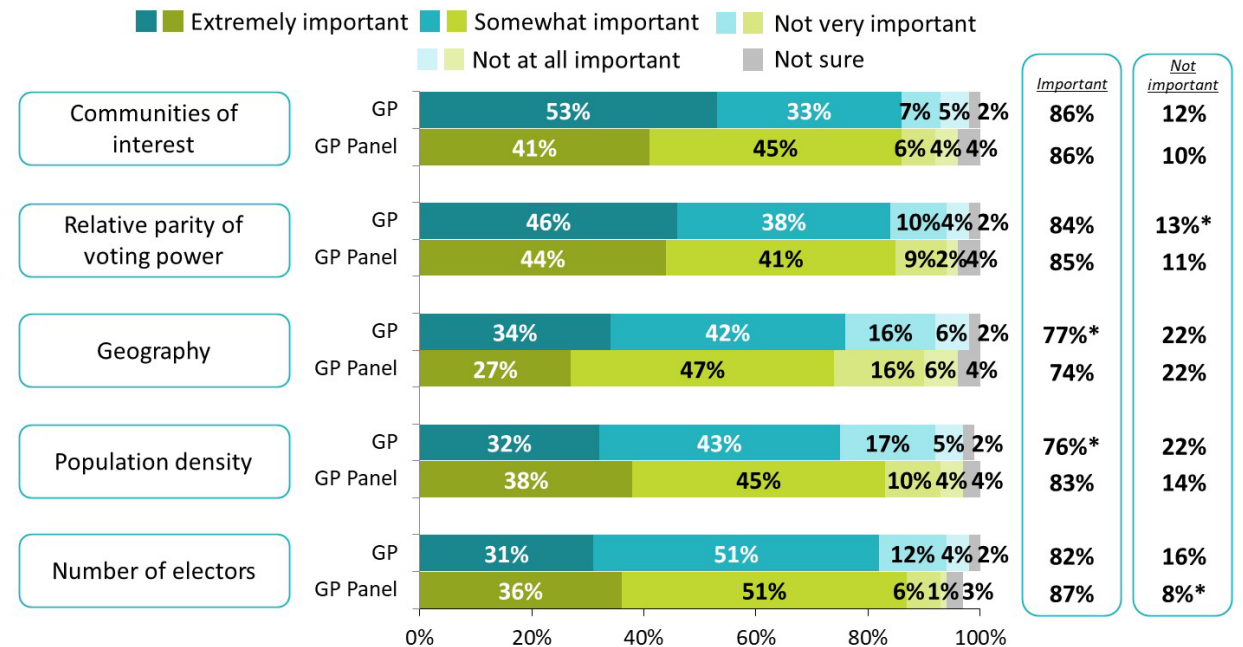


Communities of interest and relative parity of voting power are of the highest importance to residents when determining districts.

The majority of respondents believe that all listed criteria – communities of interest, relative parity of voting power, geography, population density, and number of electors – are important to some extent when considering the division of districts within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Some criteria, though, are considered to be slightly more important than others. There is a higher number of respondents who believe *communities of interest* and *relative parity of voting power* are *extremely important* criteria, while there is a less strong emphasis on the importance of *geography*, *population density* and *number of electors* in comparison.

Importance of Criteria in Deciding How Districts Are Determined within Halifax Regional Municipality



Q.C6a-e: In your view, how important are each of the following criteria in deciding how districts are determined within the Halifax Regional Municipality? (General Public n=766; Gen Pop Panel n=433) *Due to rounding.



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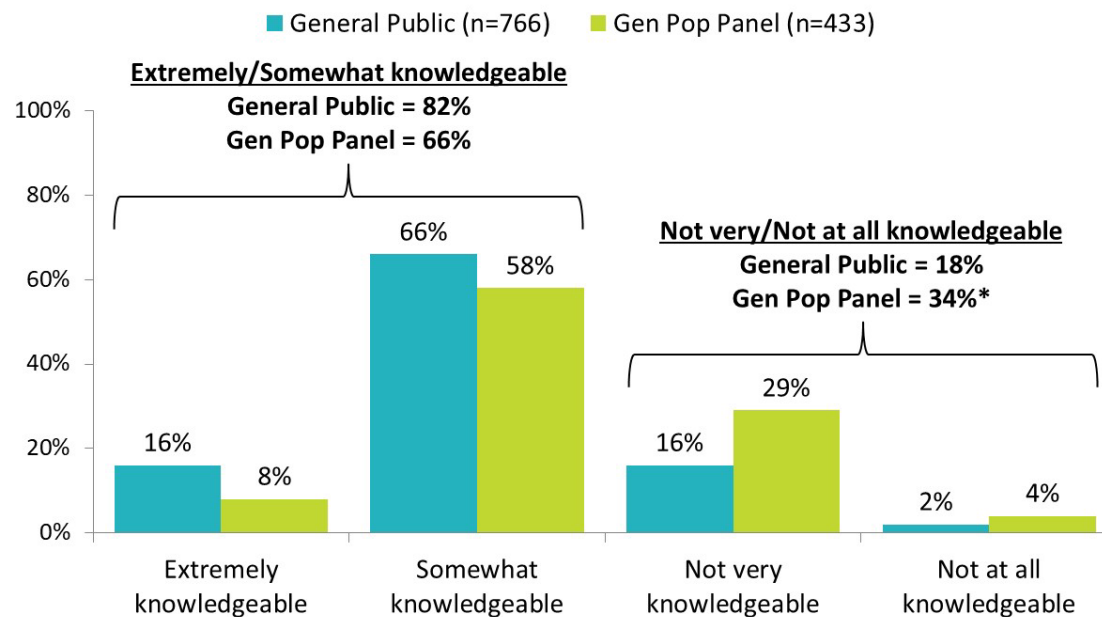
Engagement and Opinions on Councillors / Representation

Residents express having some level of knowledge about the role and responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council.

On average, residents have some idea of the roles and responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council. While there are some residents who consider themselves to be *extremely knowledgeable* on the functions of the Halifax Regional Council, the majority of residents feel *somewhat knowledgeable*. This is followed by three-in-ten residents who feel they are *not very knowledgeable*. Though, very few indicated they do *not feel knowledgeable at all*.

Individuals who are more likely to identify as *extremely/somewhat knowledgeable* are those who have contacted their councillor, attended at least one council/committee meeting, lived in the HRM for more than 15 years, and/or are older. Males are also more likely to indicate feeling knowledgeable on the roles and responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council.

Level of Knowledge About Role and Responsibilities of Halifax Regional Council



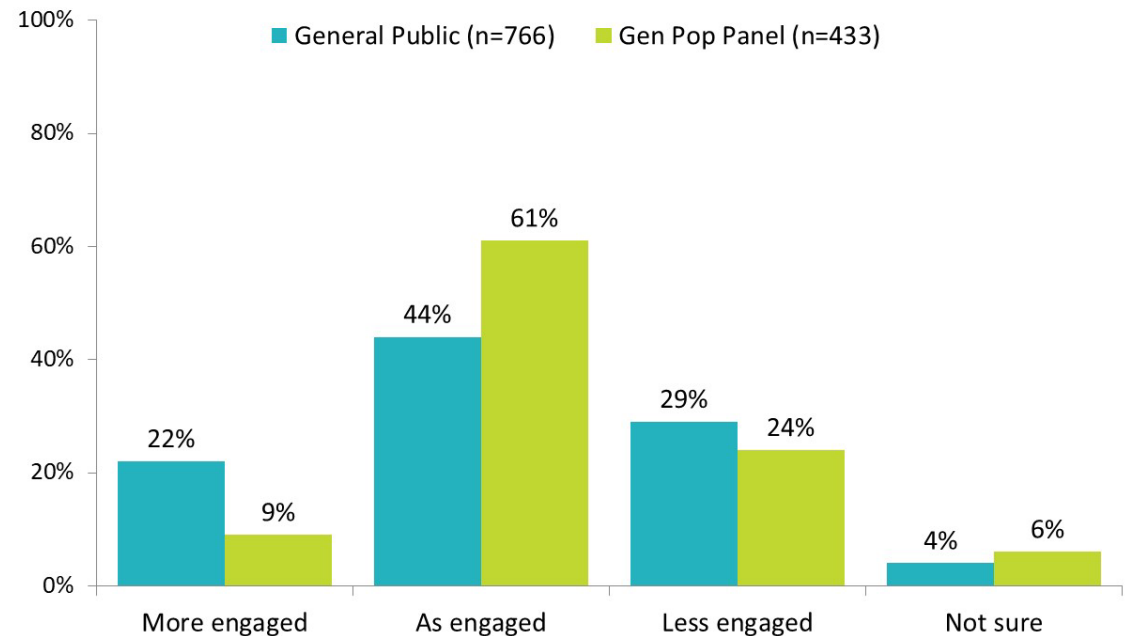
Q.A11: How knowledgeable do you personally feel about the role and responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council?

*Due to rounding.

Engagement with the municipal government since the last election remains consistent for most residents, though about one quarter indicated feeling less engaged.

Since the municipal election in 2020, the majority of respondents indicate they feel *as engaged*. Though, nearly a quarter of respondents feel *less engaged*, while just one in ten are feeling *more engaged*. Across sub-groups, responses for *as engaged* and *less engaged* are generally consistent. Though, those who express a higher level of engagement since the last municipal election are more likely to be younger.

Level of Engagement Since Municipal Election in October 2020



Q.C8: Since the most recent municipal election in October 2020, do you feel more engaged, less engaged, or as engaged as previously?



Most residents are eligible and plan to vote in future, though participation in meetings is low.

Nearly all residents indicate they are currently *eligible to vote* in municipal elections *plan to do so in the upcoming election*. Most also indicate they *previously voted in the recent 2020 election*. (Note that it is common to see over-reporting of previous voting).

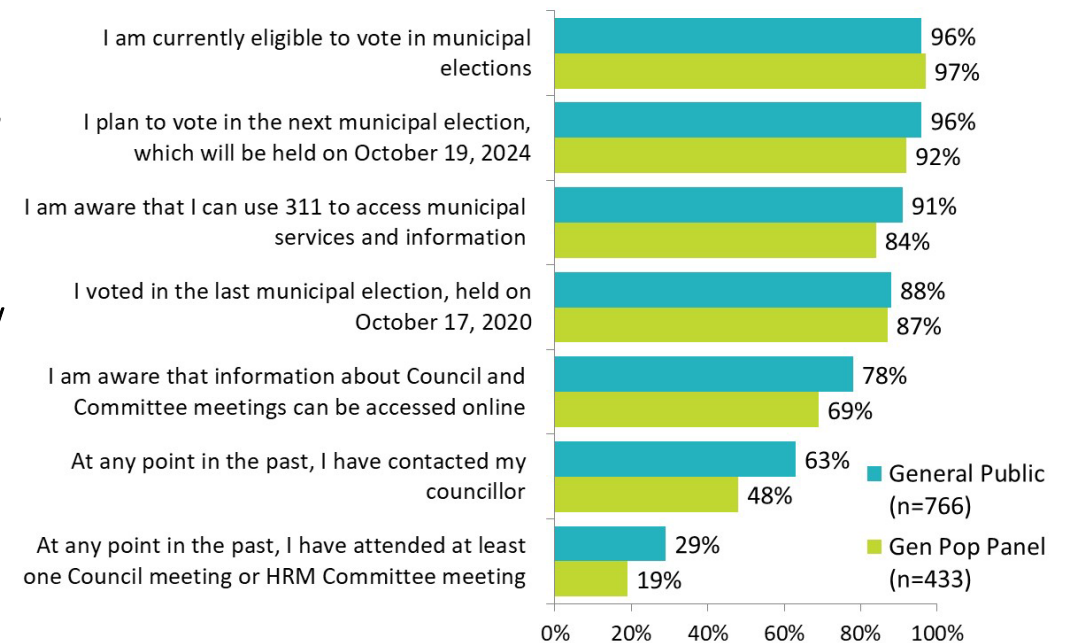
Awareness of access to municipal information is moderately high. Most respondents are aware that *municipal services and information can be accessed using 311*, while a slightly smaller proportion are aware that *information about Council and Committee meetings can also be accessed online*.

Meanwhile, participation in local government is relatively low compared to voting and awareness. Specifically, nearly half of gen pop panel respondents indicate have *contacted their councillor*, and even fewer *have attended a Council or HRM Committee meeting*.

Residents who have lived in the HRM for less than 15 years were less likely to have voted in the last election and are less likely to be aware of how to access information on the municipality. Males on the other hand are more likely to be aware that information on meetings can be accessed online, while older residents are more likely to have attended a council meeting in the past.

Awareness and Engagement on Municipal Issues

% Saying "Yes"



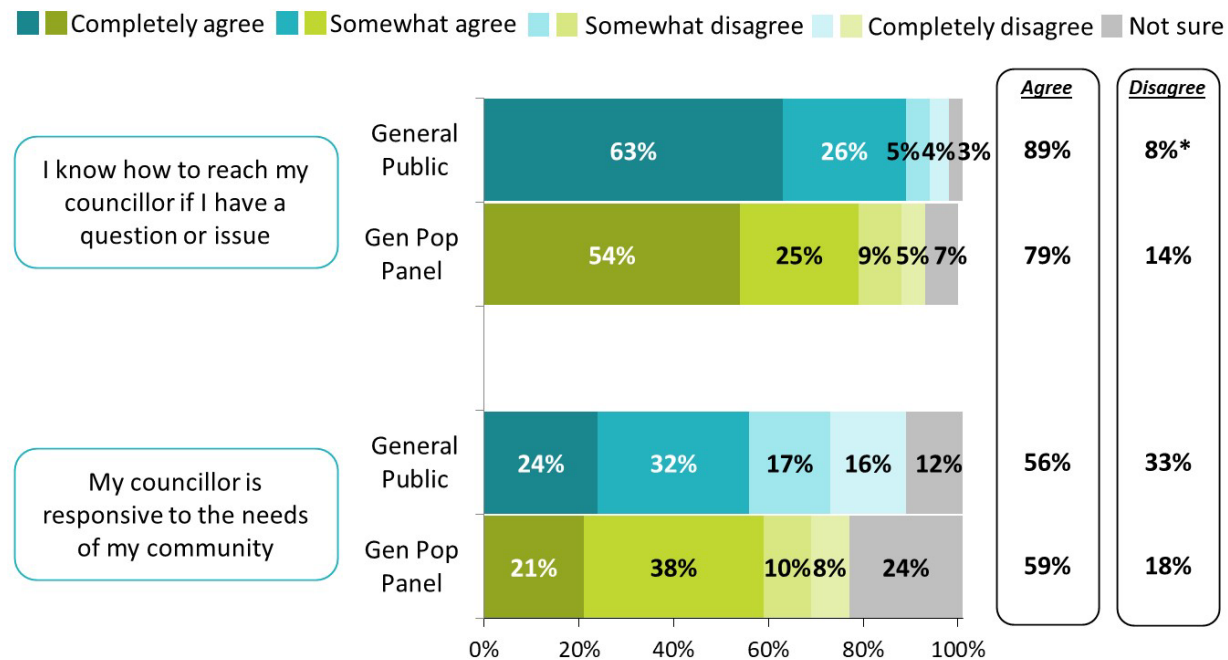
Q.A6a-g: Please respond to each of the following statements with a 'yes' or a 'no'.



The majority of residents know how to reach their councillor with questions or issues, but there is less agreement that their councillor is responsive to the needs of their community.

The majority of residents *completely agree* that they *know how to reach their councillor if they have a question or issue*, with a strong majority agreeing to some extent. In comparison, levels of agreement are lower in regards to the statement *my councillor is responsive to the needs of my community*. Notably, a quarter of Gen Pop Panel respondents were *not sure* whether they agreed or disagreed with this particular statement, so levels of disagreement in this group were comparatively lower than that of the General Public.

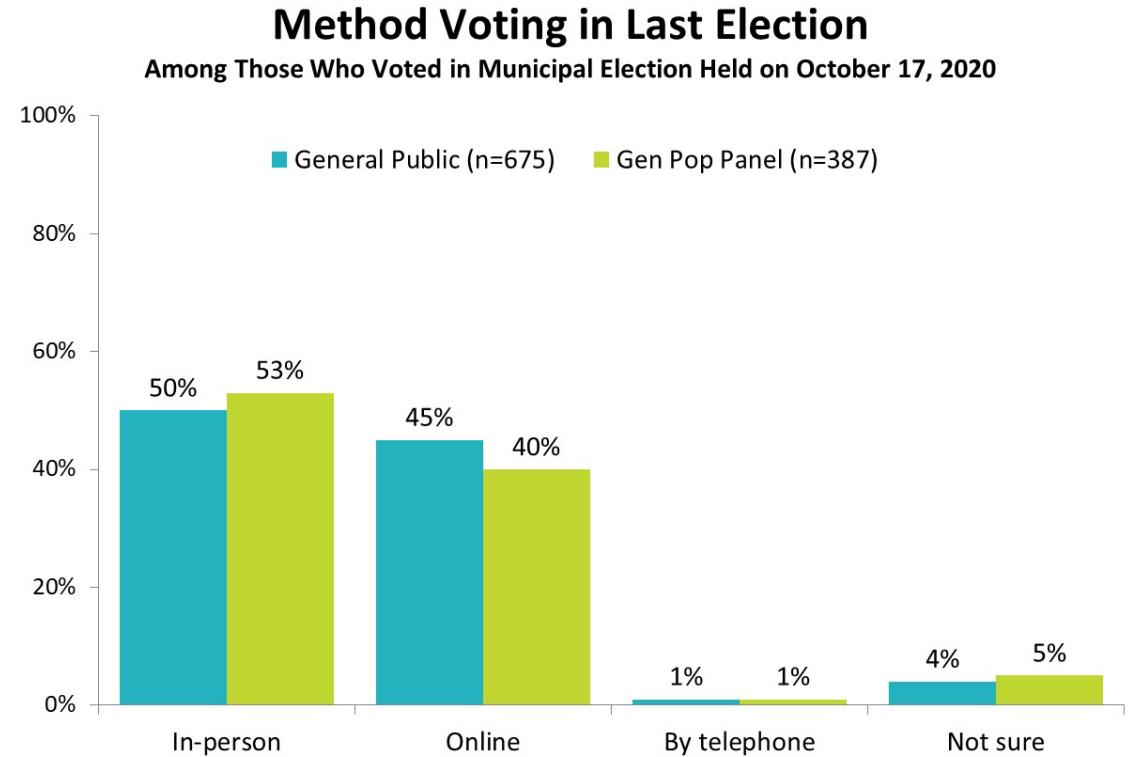
Opinion of Statements About Your Councillor



Q.C7a-b: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (General Public n=766; Gen Pop Panel n=433)
*Due to rounding.

During the last election, there were near equal proportions who voted in-person and online.

True to both the General Public and Gen Pop Panel groups, the most popular reported voting method during the last election was 'in-person', followed closely behind by 'online'. Conversely, few residents voted by telephone.

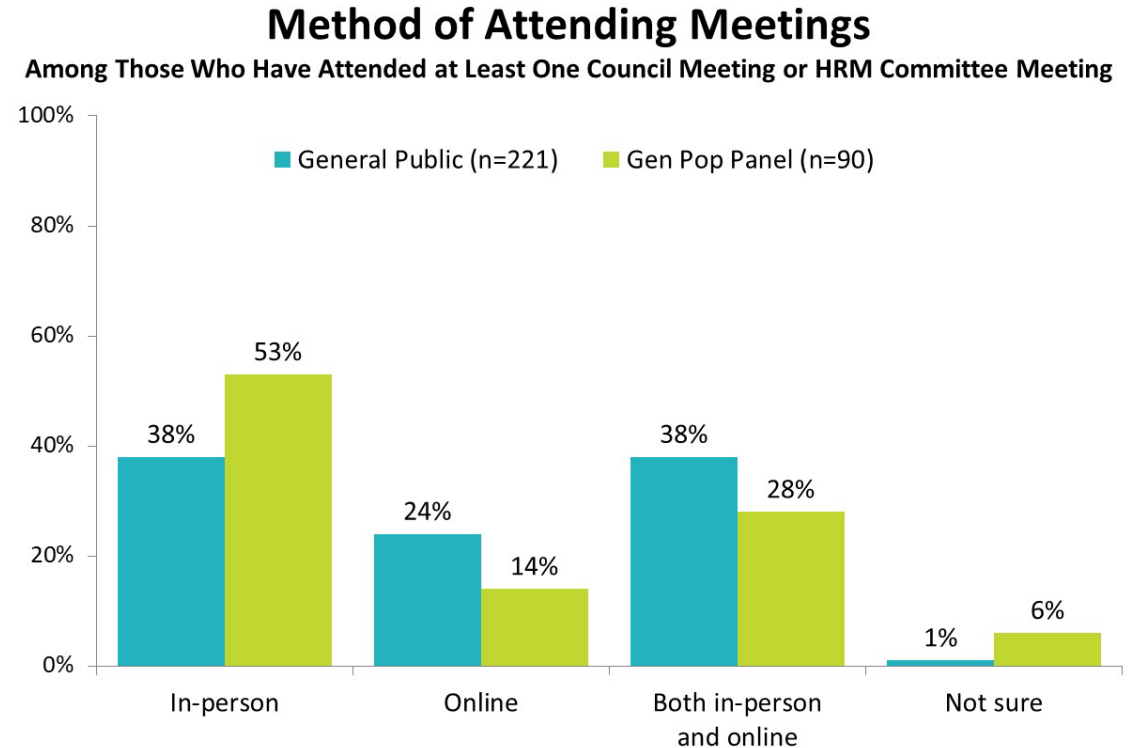


Q.A7: [IF 'YES' IN Q.A6B] How did you vote in the last election?

Most meeting attendees exclusively took part in-person, though many took part online.

The bulk of residents who attended Council or Committee meetings exclusively attended in-person as opposed to those who only attended online, while one-quarter have attended in both ways. Importantly, results indicate that these online meetings bring greater accessibility to residents as some have only attended these meetings online and may otherwise not have attended if this option were not available. As shared by councillors in the qualitative discussions, results reinforce that the ability to join meetings online would offer added accessibility going forward.

The likelihood of going online to attend a council or committee meeting decreases with age. Accordingly, older residents were more likely to attend meetings in-person.



Q.A8: [IF 'YES' IN Q.A6E] Did you attend a Council or HRM Committee meeting in-person, online, or have you attended in both ways?



The most common reason residents provided for not attending a council or committee meeting was a lack of interest.

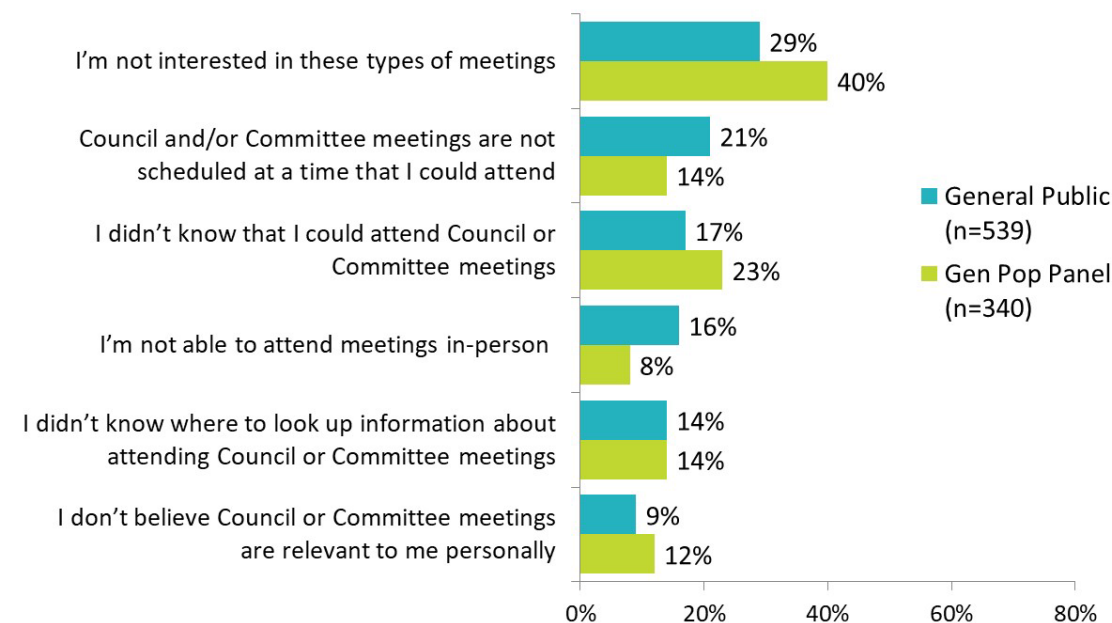
The majority of residents who have not attended a council or committee meeting stated it was due to *lack of interest*. Related to this, a smaller proportion of respondents also believe that meetings are *not relevant to them personally*.

Second to this, common reasons also revolved around barriers to attending these meetings. A number of residents stated that meetings were not *scheduled at a time that they could attend* while a smaller proportion indicated they were not able to *attend meetings in-person*. Once again reinforcing the value of online meeting access.

Finally, not being informed was the third most common reason why residents did not attend meetings. Some indicated a *lack of awareness regarding the public's ability to attend such meetings*, as well as *not knowing where to find information about attending meetings*. This appears to reflect the previous findings, where about one quarter of residents are not aware that information on meetings can be accessed online.

Reason for Not Attending a Council or Committee Meeting

Key Aided Mentions, Among Those Who Have Not Attended



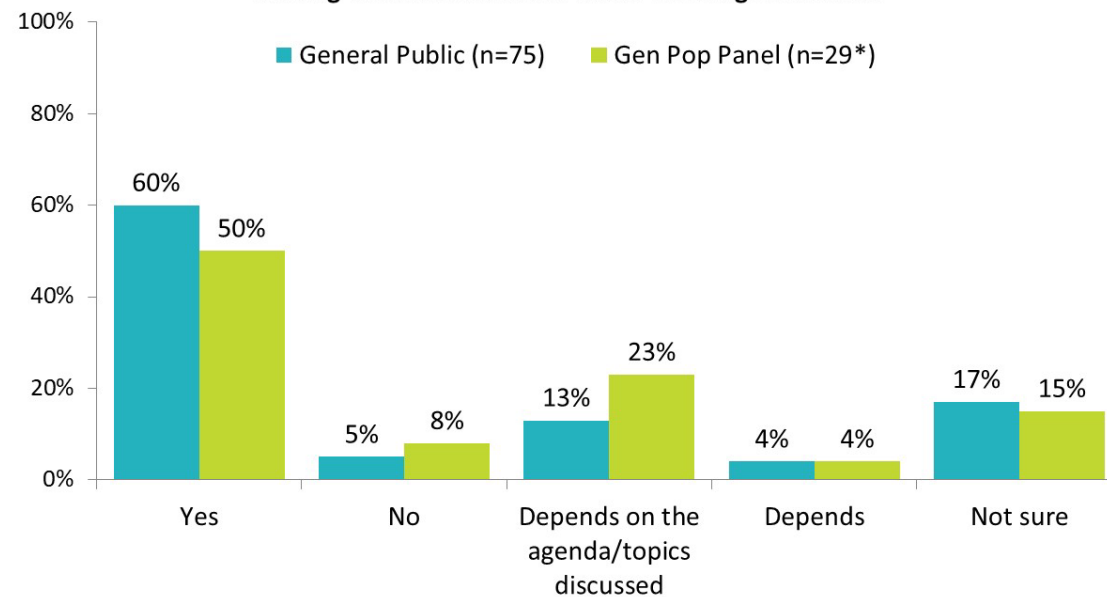
Q.A9: [IF 'NO' IN Q.A6E] Why have you not attended a Council or Committee Meeting? Select all that apply.

Most residents stated they would attend Council or Committee meetings if made available online.

Among the small number of residents who indicated they were not able to attend meetings in-person, most residents confirmed they would go online to attend council or committee meetings if this option was made available. This was followed by a smaller proportion of residents who maintained that their attendance to online meetings would depend on the topics being discussed. Only a small number stated they would not attend council or committee meetings if available online, while about one in eight respondents were unsure.

Would Attend Council or Committee Meetings If Available Online

Among Those Not Able to Attend Meetings In-Person

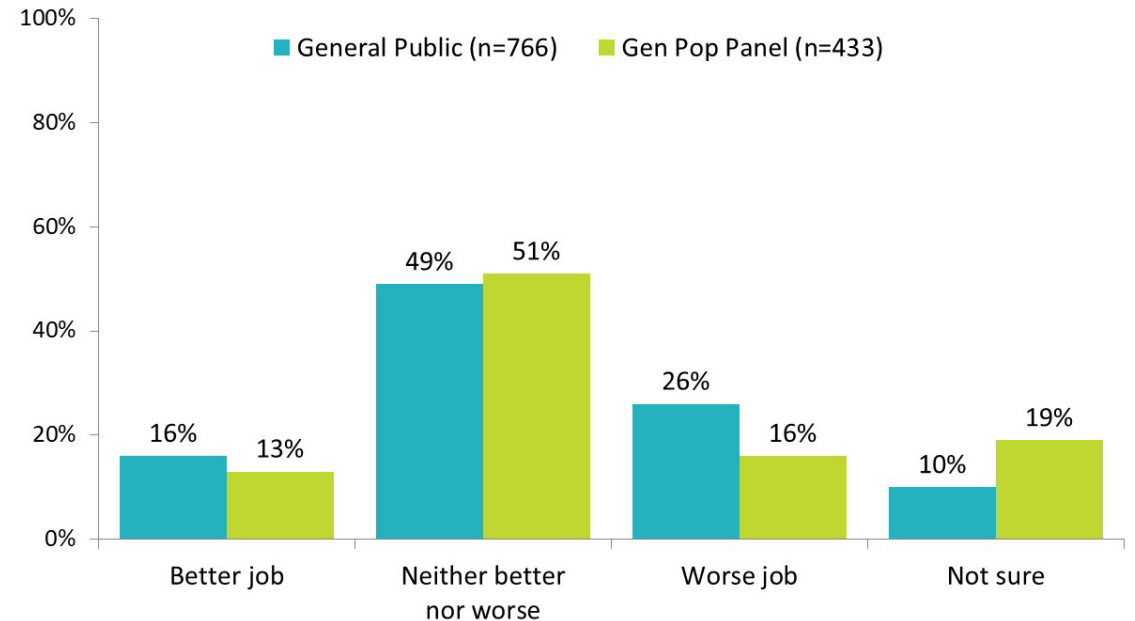


Q.A10: [IF 'NOT ABLE TO ATTEND MEETINGS IN-PERSON' IN Q.A9] If Council and/or Committee meetings could be attended virtually or remotely, meaning that you could not only view, but also participate in meetings remotely, would you attend online? **Caution: Small sample size.*

One-half of residents feel their municipal councillor has neither done a better nor worse job at representing them on the Halifax Regional Council, while opinions are split amongst the remaining residents.

One-half of residents provided a neutral rating when asked to assess how well their councillor has represented them on the Halifax Regional Council since October 2020, while small proportions each believe their councillor is now doing a *better* or *worse* job. Residents who believe their councillor has done a *worse* or *better job* at representing them are more likely to have contacted their councillor and have attended a council/committee meeting.

Rating How Your Municipal Councillor Represents You on Halifax Regional Council Since October 2020



Q.C9: Since the most recent municipal election in October 2020, would you rate your municipal councillor as doing a better job, a worse job, or neither better nor worse job representing you on Halifax Regional Council?

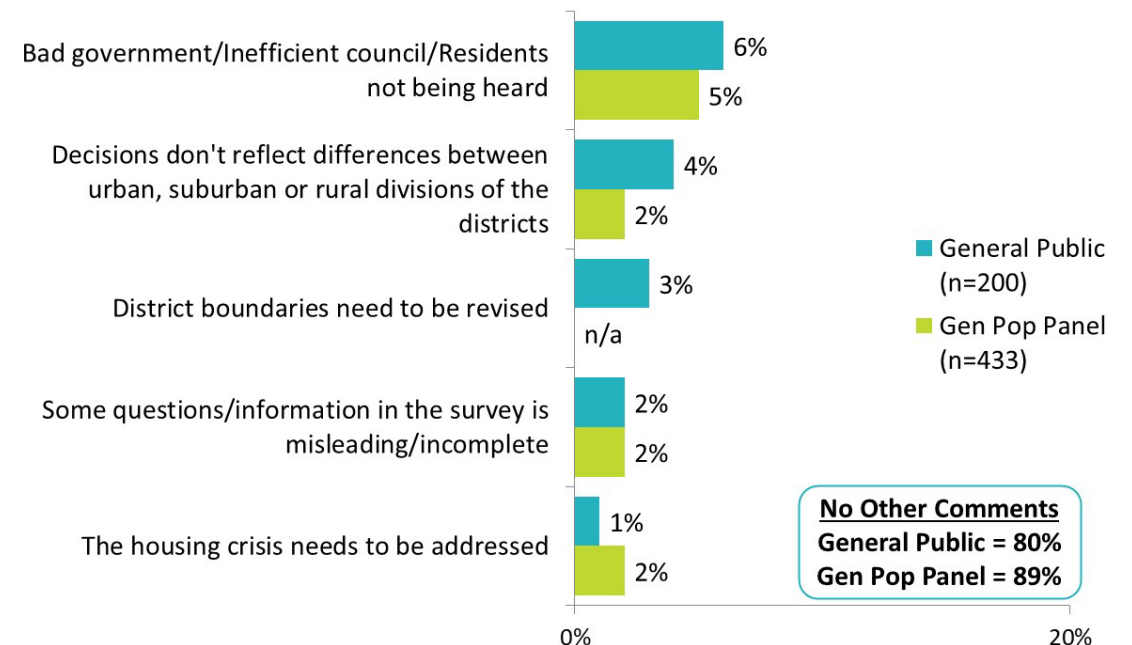
Given the opportunity to share additional comments regarding the survey, a small proportion note issues around representation.

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided the opportunity to share any additional comments. While the vast majority did not, the most common mentions focus on issues of representation. These include *bad government/inefficient council/residents not being heard, differences between urban, suburban or rural divisions of districts not reflected in decisions, and a need to revise district boundaries.*

A handful of residents expressed dissatisfaction with the *survey questions/information as missing/incomplete*, while a similar number commented on the *necessity of addressing the housing crisis.*

Any Other Comments About Topics in Survey

Key Unaided Mentions



Q.D8: Do you have any other comments about the topics in this survey?

Note: 200 random General Public responses were selected for coding.



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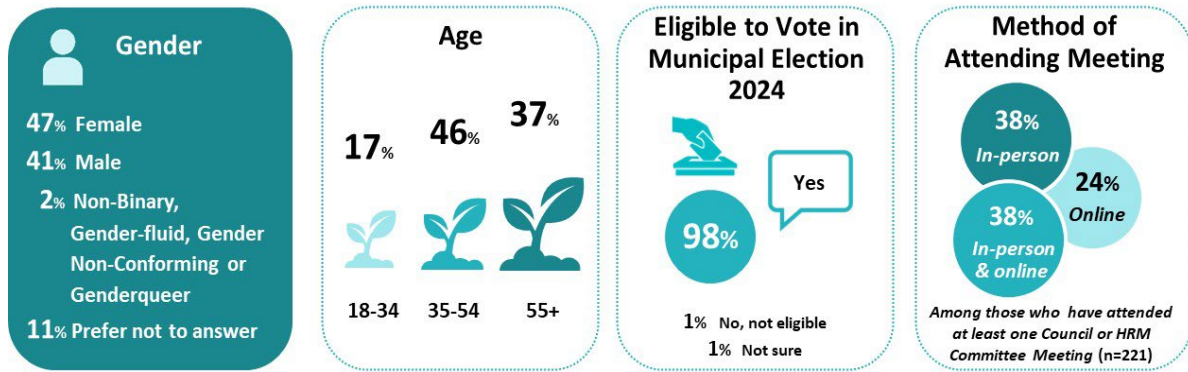
Respondent Profile



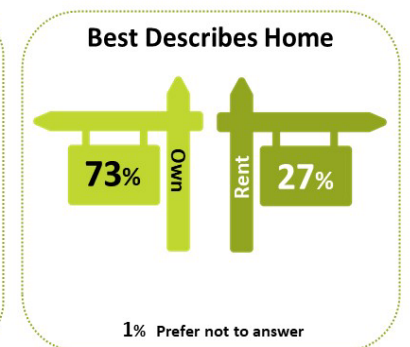
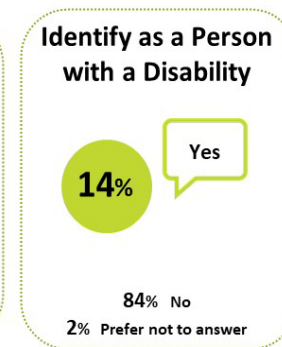
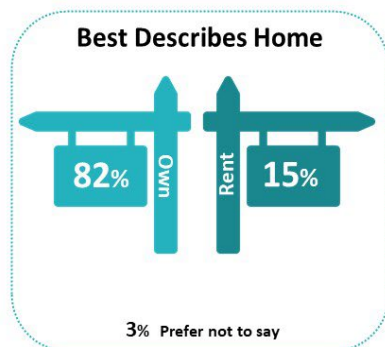
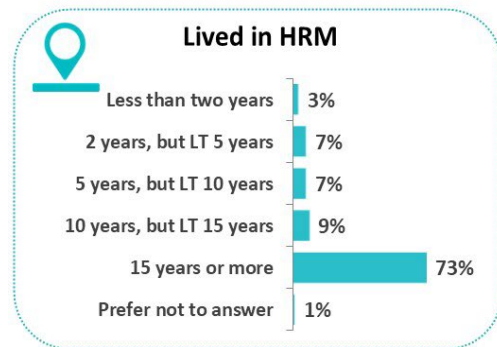
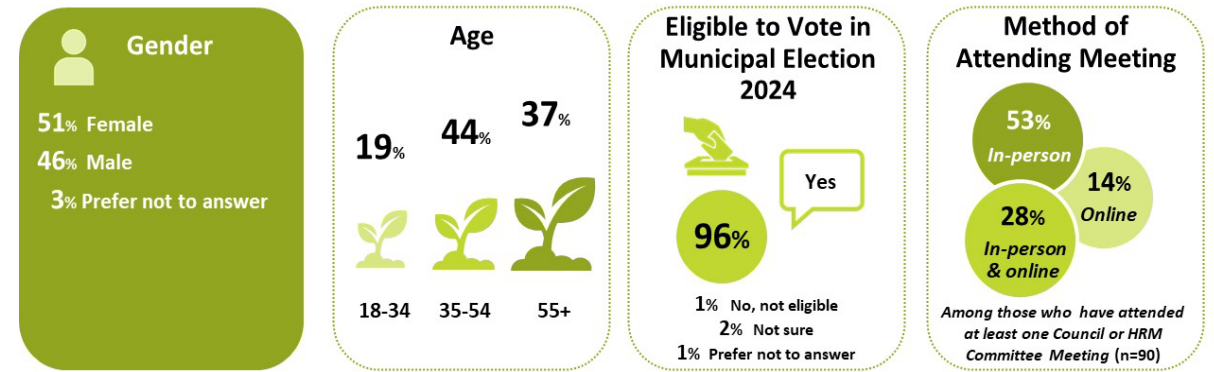
Demographic Profile of Respondents

The following provides an overview of the research participants, by audience.

Profile of Respondents – General Public (n=766)



Profile of Respondents – Gen Pop Panel (n=433)





Methodology:



Online surveys

Gen Pop (General Public): 766 completed surveys, field dates: April 6-25, 2022
GP Panel (Gen Pop Panel): 433 completed surveys, field dates: April 7-25, 2022

Existing Knowledge

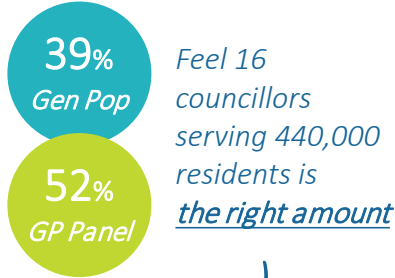


Aware of the Council's Responsibilities

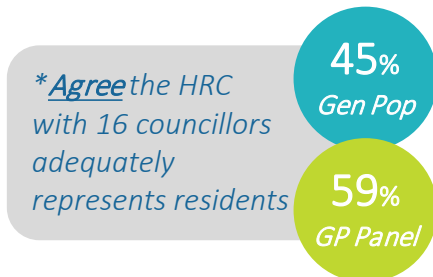
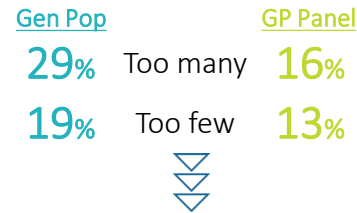
Gen Pop		GP Panel
97%	Garbage collection	96%
97%	Municipal infrastructure	95%
97%	Community & recreation centres	95%
97%	Public transit	94%
96%	Fire services	91%
95%	Police	91%
92%	Land use planning	91%
91%	Traffic signals	87%
90%	Public library funding	86%
67%	Diversity & inclusion services	53%

Halifax Regional Council Structure

Unaided Views

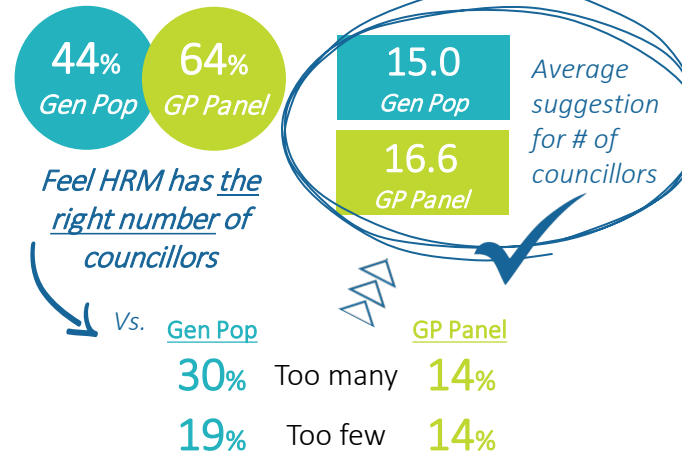
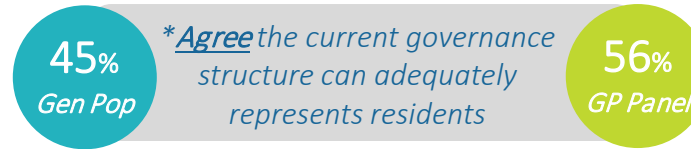


Vs.



Aided Views

(after being provided with more details, including the chart above)



~Importance of criteria in deciding how districts are determined within HRM

Gen Pop		GP Panel
86%	Communities of interest	86%
84%	Relative parity of voting power	85%
82%	Number of electors	87%
77%	Geography	74%
76%	Population density	83%

Gen Pop		GP Panel
89%	*Agree that they know how to reach their councillor if they have a question or issue	79%
56%	*Agree that their councillor is responsive to the needs of their community	59%

*Represent 'completely/mostly agree' responses. ~Represent 'extremely/somewhat important' responses.



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Public Input From Community Council Meetings

A presentation and discussion on the District Boundary Review – Phase One Study was led by Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk, and Liam MacSween, Elections and Special Projects Manager at three committee meetings. MacLean and MacSween also responded to questions of clarification from the Community Councils.

On April 19, 2022, MacLean and MacSween gave a presentation on the District Boundary Review – Phase One Study to the Halifax and West Community Council.

- Several issues were discussed including the implementation of a permanent First Nations member on the Regional Council, a review of the current advisory committee structure, the use of a ranked ballot or run-off ballot system, permanent-resident voting rights and lowering the voting age to 16 years old.
- MacLean and MacSween advised the Community Council that the identified items of concern are not within the scope of the Phase One of the District Boundary Review, but will be documented as staff move through the review process.
- There were no speakers registered to address Halifax and West Community Council on the District Boundary Review – Phase One presentation.

On April 20, 2022, MacLean and MacSween gave a presentation on the District Boundary Review – Phase One Study to the Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council. Correspondence from Shalom Murti Mandaville, District 5, was also presented before the council.

- Community Council discussed the NSUARB requirement for a plus/minus ten percent voter parity requirement, the public response to the Phase One survey, the possibility of extending voting rights to permanent residents, and the requirement for the NSUARB to evaluate the number of electors represented within the boundary reviews, as opposed to the number of residents.
- There were no speakers registered to address Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council on the two District Boundary Review presentations.

On April 25, 2022, MacLean and MacSween gave a presentation on the District Boundary Review - Phase One Study to the North West Community Council.

- Members of the Community Council noted that the comparison to other jurisdictions should consider Councillor support and geographical size, and that communications with respect to the role of the Nova Utility and Review Board should be strengthened.
- There were no speakers registered to address North West Community Council on the District Boundary Review – Phase One presentation.

On April 28, 2022, MacLean and MacSween gave a presentation on the District Boundary Review - Phase One Study to the Regional Centre Community Council.

- With respect to the relative parity of voting power, Members of the Community Council sought clarification regarding the +/- ten percent variance requirement outlined in the Municipal Government Act – which ensures all districts have roughly the same number of electors. The impact that Bill 137 will have on Phase Two engagement was also raised.
- There were no speakers registered to address Regional Centre Community Council on the District Boundary Review – Phase One presentation.

Email correspondence was received from four HRM residents sharing their thoughts and concerns on the District Boundary Review.

April 20, 2022 – Resident from District 5

- Recommends the reallocation of boundaries to mirror the Provincial districts – believes there is benefit in councillors working alongside provincial MLAs.

April 22 2022 – Resident from District 3

- Suggested incorporating the Woodlawn area under one district, as it is currently split between District 3 and District 6.

April 26 2022 – Resident from District 12

- Raised issue with the combination of rural and urban areas, and perceives that the current Councillor is experiencing difficulties in understanding the differential concerns of rural and urban residents.
- Believes this is reflected in lack of relevant information in district updates / newsletters.

April 27 2022 – Resident (From Halifax Peninsula area - district not identified)

- Notes that current size of districts is fine, but raises concern with rural communities - that are part of the same district as residents from the Halifax peninsula - having a say in urban management. Recommends trimming boundaries and adding a councillor to the Peninsula.
- Mentions dissatisfaction with the provincial establishment of housing development centres without regard to the Halifax Regional Council.



NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Every insight tells a story.

Attachment 2

HALIFAX

**2022 District
Boundary Review
– Phase One**

Community Council Presentation

Phase One - Scope

Phase One is to:

- Review Council Governance structure;
- Provide rationale for the number of councillors and polling districts for HRM

What is required for:

- Effective political management?
- Effective representation?
- Accountability?

Phase Two - Scope

Phase Two is to:

- Review the distribution of polling districts within HRM in accordance with section 368 (4) of the MGA
- Considers the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, communities of interest, and geographic size
- Public Engagement will be led by District Boundary Resident Review Panel

Aspects of Review

- Focuses on matters within the jurisdiction of the NSUARB under current legislative framework



Halifax Regional Council

- Halifax Regional Council serves as the decision- making body for the Halifax Regional Municipality;
- Council is Comprised of 16 Councillors who represent 16 electoral districts and one Mayor elected at large;
- Governed by the *HRM Charter*

Current Governance Structure



Community Council

There are four Community Councils, each consisting of five to six districts.

- Harbour East-Marine Drive – Districts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
- Halifax & West – Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
- North West – Districts 1, 13, 14, 15, 16
- Regional Centre – Districts 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Community Council – Roles and Authority

- Consider development variances and site-plan approvals
- Consider development agreements
- Hold public hearings
- Consider amendments to land use by-laws
- Advise Council on Municipal Planning Strategy Amendments
- Recommend to Council expenditures to be financed by area rates
- Establish advisory committees
- Make Councillor appointments to Standing Committees
- Make recommendations to Council on public appointments
- New Legislation (Bill 137) may have impact on recommendation on some planning advisory decisions

Standing Committees

In 2012, Halifax Regional Council created Standing Committees to examine specific issues, outlined in their Terms of Reference (Admin Order One)

There are six (6) Standing Committees:

- Appeals (decision making body)
 - Audit & Finance
 - Community Planning & Economic Development
 - Environment & Sustainability
 - Transportation
 - Executive
-
- Provide recommendations (except for Appeals) and advice to Council on specific matters
 - Can request staff reports in accordance with their Terms of Reference
 - Are the primary forum for public input (AO1 section 43)

Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions

- HRM's Boards and Committees are groups consisting of Councillors, residents and subject matter experts that provide advice and recommendations to Council on certain matters
- Have specific Terms of Reference that guide the work that they do
- Many volunteer opportunities for members of the public to serve on HRM Boards and Committees.

Population Growth

- Population growth will influence the Boundary Review process now and in future reviews
- Increases in population do not happen equally across the HRM
- The NSUARB requires relative parity power of voting parity (i.e that all districts have roughly the same number of electors so that each vote carries the same weight)
- NSUARB requires relative voter parity of +/- 10%

Current Population/ Number of Electors

- Since the 2010 review, the HRM has grown by 70,410 residents to a total of 443,089.
- The Halifax Regional Municipality is in the top six (6) of the 25 largest municipalities in Canada with a 9.1% population growth rate from 2016-2021.

Number of Electors and Population by 2024

Electoral District	Population	Current # of Electors	Projected # of Electors by 2024
01-Waverley-Fall River-Musquodoboit Valley	23,685	18,772	19,740
02-Preston-Chezzetcook-Eastern Shore	27,185	22,297	23,315
03-Dartmouth South-Eastern Passage	31,384	24,475	26,238
04-Cole Harbour-Westphal-Lake Loon-Cherry Brook	25,963	20,909	21,911
05-Dartmouth Centre	29,587	25,167	26,195
06-Harbourview-Burnside-East Dartmouth	26,403	21,651	22,667
07-Halifax South Downtown	26,997	23,432	25,287
08-Halifax Peninsula North	29,002	23,942	26,123

Continued

Electoral District	Population	Current # of Electors	Projected # of Electors by 2024
09-Halifax West Armdale	29,651	18,772	25,444
10-Halifax Bedford Basin-West	27,048	22,297	23,420
11-Spryfield-Sambro Loop-Prospect Road	27,605	22,243	23,243
12-Timberlea-Beechville-Clayton Park-Wedgewood	30,562	24,239	25,844
13-Hammonds Plains – St. Margarets	28,532	21,689	23,128
14-Middle/Upper Sackville – Beaver Bank - Lucasville	25,242	19,499	20,534
15-Lower Sackville	22,480	18,323	19,159
16-Bedford-Wentworth	31,763	25,276	26,700
Total	443,089	358,497	378,948
Average	27,693	22,406	23,648

Comparator Municipalities

Municipality	Population (2021)	Number of Districts	Number of Residents per District
Winnipeg	749,607	15	49,974
City of Hamilton	568,353	15	37,890
Quebec City	549,459	21	26,165
Halifax Regional Municipality	439,819	16	27,489
Laval	438,366	21	20,874
London	422,324	14	30,166
Gatineau	291,041	19	15,318
Saskatoon	266,141	10	26,614

Population Summary

- On average HRM's Councillors represent 27,693 residents and 22,406 electors per district.
- By 2024 the number of electors are projected to grow to 378,948 or 23,648 per district (average)

Phase One – Key Considerations

- Do you feel that HRM's current governance structure is accessible to residents? Does it allow for effective decision making?
- Does it allow for effective representation for you or your district?
- If not, what changes should be considered to Community Councils, Standing Committees or Advisory Committees to make them more effective?

Phase One – Key Considerations

What are you looking for from your district councillor in representing you on Regional Council?

What do you think should be the population/representation for HRM's districts?

- Same as now, more people, fewer people?

Phase One – Key Considerations

Given what you have heard this evening,
should Regional Council be:

- the same size it is now?
- larger?
- smaller?

How can I continue to engage?

- Public Engagement Survey – Narrative Research –April 6-April 25, 2022
- Public Information Meetings hosted by Community Councils – April 19-April 28, 2022
- Corresponding with the Executive Standing Committee
- Public Participation at Executive Standing Committee – April, May 2022

Questions?





REVISED March 1, 2022

Page 3 only

P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No.
Executive Standing Committee
February 28, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



(Original Signed)

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 18, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 District Boundary Review – Phase One

ORIGIN

The Municipal Government Act requires that HRM undertake a district boundary review every eight (8) years. Council is required to submit an application to the Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors by December 31, 2022.

December 14, 2021 motion of Halifax Regional Council to designate the Executive Standing Committee (ESC) to undertake Phase One of the District Boundary Review and bring forward a recommendation to Regional Council on or before May 31, 2022, with regard to the number of Municipal Polling Districts appropriate to regional decision making, including a Community Council governance structure for the HRM.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 364 of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter:

Part XVI of the Municipal Government Act applies to the Municipality. 2008, c.39, s364

Part XVI of the Municipal Government Act:

369(1) In the year 1999, and in the year 2006 and every eight years thereafter the council shall conduct a study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness and the number of councillors.

(2) After the study is completed and before the end of the year in which the study was conducted the council shall apply to the Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors.

RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Executive Standing Committee approve in principle the 2022 District Boundary Review Public Engagement process and timeline for Phase One as described in the discussion section and attachment three of this report.

BACKGROUND

On December 14, 2021, Halifax Regional Council approved a motion confirming the two phased study approach to the 2022 District Boundary Review process as recommended by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB). Phase One is intended to review the Council Governance and provide rationale for the number of polling districts for the HRM. Once a recommendation on the size of Regional Council has been developed, Phase Two will look at polling district boundaries across the municipality. Both phases of the study will require public consultation and must consider the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest and geographic size.

Phase One will require Council to consider the desired number of polling districts for the HRM. The NSUARB has indicated that this should include an evaluation of what is required for effective political management, effective representation, and accountability. As a part of the 2010/11 review a special committee of Council was struck. For the 2022, Regional Council has designated the Executive Standing Committee to undertake this part of the review. The role of Executive Standing Committee in Phase One will be:

- Advise on the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the existing governance model for Regional Council,
- Provide direction and confirmation on public engagement activities as well as required information for evaluation,
- Participate in the public engagement sessions,
- Receive “what we heard” reports from phase one of public engagement and provide feedback prior to a formal submission to Regional Council,
- Provide a recommendation, based on public consultation, to Regional Council on the recommended number of polling districts on or before May 31, 2022.

It is important to note that work on both phases of the study is being done concurrently.

DISCUSSION

Phase One of the District Boundary Review requires Regional Council review the existing governance model for Regional Council. The NSUARB has indicated:

“Determining the size of council involves the consideration of the desired style of Council, the governance structure of Council, and a determination of an effective and efficient number of councillors. The style of government is a question which should not be decided by council until adequate public consultation has occurred respecting the expectation of its constituents. The size of council and its governance structure is a matter which can then be determined by Council in an informed debate.”

Governance Structure

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* (HRM Charter) is provincial legislation that provides the governance framework for the Municipality. All other municipalities in Nova Scotia are governed by the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA). The HRM Charter adopts some entire parts of the MGA (including Part XVI – Boundaries) by reference.

Sections 8 and 9 of the HRM Charter establish the minimum requirements for the size of Council and representation for each polling district:

Government of Municipality

- 8 (1) The Municipality is governed by a Council consisting of at least three members.
- (2) One councillor shall be elected for each polling district in the Municipality.

Election of Mayor

- 9 (1) The Mayor shall be elected at large.
- (2) Every person eligible to vote for a councillor is eligible to vote for the Mayor.

The Mayor is elected at large, and one councilor is elected for each polling district. Since 2012, the Halifax Regional Municipality has been comprised of sixteen (16) electoral districts which are represented by sixteen (16) Councillors, and a Mayor that is elected at large.

The HRM Charter gives Council discretion in how it conducts its affairs, including granting Council the authority to establish Community Councils, Standing Committees, and Advisory Committees, and to assign certain duties to them.

Community Councils

Sections 24 and 25 of the HRM Charter provide Council with the authority to establish Community Councils and the powers and duties which may be assigned to them. These general duties include monitoring the provision of services and making recommendations with respect to services and making recommendations to Council on community matters. Currently, Council has established four community Councils, each consisting of five (5) to six (6) districts:

- North West Community Council (Polling Districts 1,13,14,15,16)
- Harbour East – Marine Drive Community Council (Poling Districts 2,3,4,5,6)
- Halifax and West Community Council (Polling Districts 7,8,9,10,11,12)
- Regional Centre Community Council (Polling Districts 5,6,7,8,9)

In *Administrative Order 48, Respecting the Creation of Community Councils*, Council has delegated certain authorities to Community Councils in accordance with sections 30 and 31 of the HRM Charter, including the ability to:

1. hear variance appeals and site-plan appeals;
2. approve development agreements and amendments to development agreements where the applicable municipal planning strategy provides for it;
3. amend a land use by-law if the amendment carries out the intent of the municipal planning strategy.

In its exercise of these three powers, Community Council stands in the place of Regional Council.

Standing, Special and Advisory Committees

Section 21 of the HRM Charter gives Council the ability to create standing, special and advisory committees. In 2012, Halifax Regional Council created a Standing Committee system and reporting structure for each of its associated advisory Committees. The Standing Committee structure was adopted out of several governance reviews dating back to the amalgamation of the former municipal units of Dartmouth, Halifax, Bedford, and Halifax County in 1996.

In moving to a Standing Committee structure, Council cited the need to reduce the number and complexity of advisory committees, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council decision making, bring strategic council focus to well defined policy and program areas, fill in policy development gaps, and provide accountability and oversight to advisory committees. Their main objective is to monitor current program delivery, service levels, emerging issues, recommending policy and program changes to Council, and

providing a forum for public participation¹. Currently, there are six Standing Committees comprised of six or seven members of Regional Council. They are as follows:

- Appeals Standing Committee.
- Audit and Finance Standing Committee.
- Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee.
- Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.
- Executive Standing Committee.
- Transportation Standing Committee.

The schedules to Administrative Order One set out the mandate of each standing committee. Except for the Appeals Standing Committee, standing committees generally provide advice to Council on matters within their mandate. Standing Committees are enabled to request staff reports that align with their respective mandates. This allows the Standing Committee to provide policy and program advice to Council. Standing Committees are used to review and deliberate on items within their mandates and forward a recommendation to Council for its consideration. This is intended to make the decision-making process more efficient and provide more opportunity for community engagement within the decision-making process. In 2015, Council gave Standing Committees the authority to include public participation at each regularly scheduled meeting allowing for further citizen engagement. Standing Committees often hear presentations from public organizations, citizen groups and other orders of government on matters within their terms of reference.

In addition to Community Council(s) and Standing Committees, Halifax Regional Council has twenty (20) internal advisory committees which provide specific advice to Regional Council on certain municipal policy areas. Generally, these advisory committees report directly to Standing Committees except in some instances where otherwise specified by Council. The membership of advisory committees can be entirely citizen-based or they can be comprised of both citizens and members of Regional Council. Attachment 1 of this report provides an overview of Halifax Regional Council's current governance structure including Community Council, Standing, and Advisory Committees.

Since the amalgamation of the former municipal units in 1996, Halifax Regional Council has taken an evolutionary approach with respect to its governance structure through successive reviews to establish a system that strives to maximize efficiency and allow for informed decision making at both a local and regional level. The public engagement process for Phase One of the review should therefore focus on gathering measurable data from the public and Council on how the current Standing Committee and Community Council structure is working and what changes or improvements should be considered to make it more effective.

Aspects of Review

During this review there may be governance aspects identified that are not in the jurisdiction of the NSUARB. The NSUARB does not have jurisdiction to amend legislation that rests with the Provincial Legislature of Nova Scotia including the HRM Charter, the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) or the MGA. This includes such things as voter eligibility and Councillor nomination requirements. Past Councils have identified governance priorities that, although they are not in the jurisdiction of the NSUARB, are potential opportunities for legislative change. The NSUARB has indicated that while these items may be a priority to Regional Council formal submissions should be focused on the requirements of the NSUARB. This is evidenced in the 2011 decision of the NSUARB when evaluating the Community Council governance structure proposed in the 2010 District Boundary Review application:

[190] Further, various presenters at the evening session suggested that the community councils would benefit from residents serving on the councils. Currently, only councillors are permitted under

¹ November 5, 2009 staff report re: Committees of Council Reform
<https://legacycontent.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/101012cow3n.pdf>

the Act to be members of community councils.

[191] As noted earlier in its Decision, the Board recognizes the important role of community councils. The Board has concluded that the present requirements for community councils can be accommodated in a council size of 16.

[192] In the view of the Board, the authority conferred upon community councils is a policy matter to be determined by the Province, not the Board.²

Additionally, when hearing from interveners in 2011 respecting the distinct urban/rural nature of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the NSUARB was consistent in that it would not consider matters outside of its jurisdiction:

[194] Mr. Mills testified that, in his view, the present urban/rural makeup of HRM is not workable. He described various examples which he believed demonstrated the incompatible tasks of administering both urban and rural areas. In his opinion, the root causes of the problem lie in the sheer size of the regional municipality and HRM's inability to meet the expectations of rural residents who, Mr. Mills says, request the same level of services as residents in the urban core.

[195] While he recognized the Board's lack of jurisdiction in this respect, Mr. Mills urged the Board to comment on the issue in its Decision and make a recommendation to the Province to divide the Municipality.

[196] As noted above, Mr. Novack also intimated that a significant challenge facing HRM is its large geographic size and diversity, leading to a wide "array of divergent interests".

[197] Clearly, the issue raised by Mr. Mills is outside the Board's jurisdiction. Further, even if it were inclined to consider Mr. Mills' request, the evidence in this hearing does not clearly lead to the desirability of Mr. Mills intended result. Moreover, the public did not have notice that this issue would be discussed in this hearing and there may be other views in the community about the issue. This was not the purpose of the hearing. In the circumstances, the Board considers it appropriate to make no comment on the issue.³

Currently, the only formal direction provided by Regional Council on these items from a previous review is with respect to including permanent residents on the list of electors and allowing permanent residents to run as candidates in municipal elections. A formal request for legislative amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act* was approved by motion of Council on December 2, 2014.

"The Province has indicated it viewed the ability to vote as inseparable from the ability to nominate candidates and run in elections. The question of permanent resident voting was considered, at various stages, of the administrative review of the elections process which took place from February to May 2019. Although there were several discussions, the Municipal Elections Review Advisory Committee did not recommend amendments to the Municipal Elections Act at this time to allow permanent residents to vote, nominate, and run. The Committee pointed out that it would require significant revisions to other sections of the Municipal Elections Act, including changes to the voter identification requirements and election processes. As the committee was comprised of administrators, most proposed amendments were administrative in nature. The Committee's recommendations are with the Minister for review."⁴

The district boundary application to the NSUARB should reflect existing legislation, and not assume any future amendments. The public engagement process for Phase One of the District Boundary Review should focus on changes with respect to size of Council and the governance structure currently permitted under the legislative framework. However, the public engagement process for the boundary review may identify items that Council wishes to provide direction on for in the future. Staff will document these items when identified and return to the Executive Standing Committee at a future meeting with a report on their status and how to move them forward.

² 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, section 190-192.

³ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, section 194-197.

⁴ August 8, 2019 In Camera (In Private) staff report re: Legislative Requests Update – Spring 2019 pp.5

<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hal/regional-council/190917ic-i01.pdf> (Declassified October 22, 2019)

Current Population and Number of Electors

An assessment of the current/projected District Boundaries has been completed (Attachment 2). This includes the current population of the HRM and an analysis between the districts when compared to the requirements of the NSUARB; as well as the projected voter population by 2024. Population and population growth are important factors of this for both phases of the District Boundary Review. The NUSARB requires “that the target variance for relative parity of voting power should be ±10% from the average number of electors per polling district or ward. The municipality or town must justify any variance exceeding this target in its application to the Board. The larger the proposed variance, the greater the burden on the municipal unit to justify the higher variance from the average number of electors. Factors that may support higher variances include the need to accommodate population density, community of interest or geographic size”.⁵

At the time of the 2010 review, HRM’s total population was 372,679⁶. This shows that since the 2010 review, the HRM has grown by 70,410 residents to a total of 443,089. Attachment Two (2) provides an overview of the current number of electors per district, and the projected number of electors by 2024. It is important to note that this information was compiled using data from the 2016 Census. Due to the timing of the Federal Budget release, the 2021 Census data is still being assessed by staff to determine a *district by district* comparison on the current population and number of electors. Staff will present updated numbers which incorporates this information once they have been made available from Statistics Canada. It is anticipated that this demographic information will be provided to staff in late April or early May. In terms of general population data as of 2021, the Halifax Regional Municipality is in the top six (6) of the 25 largest municipalities in Canada with a 9.1% population growth rate from 2016-2021. Downtown Halifax’s downtown population is the fastest growing in Canada (26.1%). In terms of population distribution, the Halifax Regional Municipality is as follows⁷:

Regional Centre (<10 mins from downtown)	Suburban (10-30 mins from downtown)	Rural (>30 mins from downtown)
33.6%	46.9%	19.5%

Phase One Engagement

The overall objective for Phase One of the District Boundary Review is to obtain direction on the size of Regional Council and its governance model. To achieve this, staff have developed a draft public engagement process to assist the Executive Standing Committee in gathering the necessary information to make an informed recommendation to Halifax Regional Council on Phase One of the study.

The NSUARB requires that municipalities solicit feedback from the public that will determine the size of council, the governance structure of Council, and to determine an effective and efficient number of councillors. The public engagement approach undertaken in 2010 outlined several scenarios with specific numbers of residents and the Councillors required to represent them. Members of the public were asked to provide their feedback on what they thought was the proper size of Council and number of Councillors. Additionally, the survey questions and public information meetings focused on the Community Council governance structure and solicited information on whether Community Councils should be given more authority to deal with local issues and increase public participation in the decision-making process.

As a part of the 2011 NSUARB decision the following feedback was provided by the Board in determining the size of Council:

⁵ NSUARB Municipal Boundaries User Guide - [https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/NSUARB-%23289533-v1-Municipal Boundaries User Guide Dec2021_0.pdf](https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/NSUARB-%23289533-v1-Municipal%20Boundaries%20User%20Guide%20Dec2021_0.pdf)

⁶ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html> section 116.

⁷ HRM Planning and Development 2022/23 Budget & Business Plan Presentation - <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220218bc07pres.pdf>, page 12.

[77] In determining a size of council, Dr. Williams considered three elements: the capacity of the council to provide effective political management, effective representation, and accountability. For the first element, he elaborated as follows:

Research in social psychology hypothesizes that size is a significant factor in influencing the "quality" of decision-making since, in general, there is a trade-off between efficiency (more likely in smaller bodies) and full availability of alternatives (more likely in larger ones).

An application in support of a regional council of a specific size should articulate the governance style the council itself wishes to practice and should provide consistent or conclusive research evidence in support of the appropriateness of that model to the municipality and to a council of a certain size. ... How much material must councillors review and understand before participating in council decision-making? How much casework is directed to councillors?

[78] This was not addressed in the application, as Dr. Williams elaborated:

If you're going to talk about how well the system works, and that's where you start; you've got 23, does it still work. Is it still sustainable or do we go elsewhere, you need to collect that information in some -- ideally, some verifiable fashion over a period of time to be able to say. As we heard from several councillors, "I'm run off my feet. I can't handle anymore. It would be terrible," and others saying, "Oh yeah, sure." Or the Chamber and others saying, "Oh yeah, we can easily drop seven or eight people and it wouldn't affect workload." I don't know who to believe because I don't have evidence.⁸

With respect to governance, the Board provided the following feedback from the 2011 decision of the NSUARB:

[69] *Dr. Williams found that the work of the committee did not ask the appropriate questions to encourage the uncovering of information, prompt discussion and allow for thoughtful retrospection on how Regional Council should work. Such an analysis, even if partially done, would have achieved the purposes of s. 369 of the Act (NSUARB recommended study)*

The review committee's report did not look at complementary initiatives to make the present structure work better both as a decision-making body and as a representative institution. Nor did the review demonstrate how a smaller council can better achieve these two objectives. For example, the capacity of an elected council - larger or smaller - to give residents "a voice in the deliberations of government" through "more effective methods of garnering and considering the input of residents" ... is not incorporated into the application at all.⁹

i. Survey

Staff are proposing the development of a survey during the public engagement for Phase One. The survey will be concise and will request input from residents across HRM respecting the size of Council and the effectiveness of the current Standing Committee and Community Council structure required to represent the populace effectively. The NSUARB, in its 2011 decision provided the following commentary respecting the size of Council:

[111] *While the Board is mindful that HRM adopted a means of public consultation similar to that used by HRM for other municipal issues (i.e., public meetings), the Board concludes that it effectively removed the relevant question from the discussion by its residents, i.e., the council size appropriate for HRM¹⁰.*

⁸ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, sections 77-78.

⁹ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, section 69.

¹⁰ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, section 69.

This survey will be conducted by Narrative Research who have specialized expertise in developing public engagement surveys and analyzing the data that is collected.

The survey will run concurrently with the proposed public participation meetings hosted by HRM's Community Councils. The information report and staff presentation provided at the public participation meetings will be made available to respondents and they will be encouraged to review the material in advance of completing the survey.

Draft survey questions are being developed with Narrative staff and can incorporate feedback provided by the Executive Standing Committee. Staff are intending on providing the draft survey questions to a Executive Standing Committee at a special meeting in March 2022.

ii. Public Participation Meetings hosted by Community Council

Public participation meetings related to phase one of the District Boundary review will take place at all Community Council meetings in March and early April of 2022. The public participation meeting format will be similar to that of public information meetings hosted by a Planning Advisory Committee. Staff will provide a presentation and submit an information report on the Phase One study parameters. This information will be publicly available in advance of the meeting via the Community Council agenda page. Speakers will then be given five minutes to address Community Council on the size of Regional and the effectiveness of its Community Council and Standing Committee governance model. Community Councils will be tasked with listening to the feedback from residents. The information provided at these meetings will be recorded on video, through meeting minutes and captured by the external public engagement specialists to be included in the "what we heard" report.

The public engagement meetings hosted by Community Councils will be advertised in local newspapers, on halifax.ca and through the Municipality's social media accounts. Staff are anticipating that the public engagement meetings will take place between March 21 and April 4, 2022 and that additional or special meetings of some Community Councils may be required to achieve this timeline.

iii. Interviews with Councillors

Members of Council will be interviewed to determine their thoughts on the size of Council and the current governance model. With assistance from Narrative Research, a list of standardized questions will be produced and interviews with members of Council and the Mayor will be scheduled. The engagement questions will be similar to those provided in the public survey and will focus on the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the existing governance model and size of Council from a Councillor's perspective. As part of the 2011 NSUARB decision the following feedback was provided by the Board:

[71] Dr. Williams stated that if he were asked to conduct a study he would have incorporated, as a start, the five questions asked by the UK Electoral Commission.

- 1) Roles and responsibilities of the councillor.*
- 2) Allocation of councillor time.*
- 3) Council size and efficiency and effectiveness.*
- 4) Council characteristics.*
- 5) Members per ward and councillor workload.¹¹*

Staff are recommending that the interview questions, and the public engagement activities incorporate elements of the five questions articulated by Dr. Williams. It is anticipated that these interviews will be conducted from mid-March to early April 2022 and the data collected will be used to inform the "what we heard" report.

¹¹ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html> , section 75.

iv. Correspondence

The Municipal Clerk's Office will receive correspondence from members of the public on Phase One of the 2022 District Boundary Review. This correspondence will be collected through the clerks@halifax.ca mailbox and processed by staff in the municipal Clerk's Office. This correspondence will be shared with members of the Executive Standing Committee and provided to the third-party engagement specialists for analysis in the "what we heard" report.

v. Executive Standing Committee

Upon completion of the public engagement activities related to Phase One of the District Boundary Review in April 2022. With the assistance of external engagement specialists, the "what we heard" report will be developed and submitted to the Executive Standing Committee for its consideration and recommendation to Halifax Regional. Staff are proposing that this meeting of the Executive Standing Committee be open to all members of Regional Council to participate in the discussion before the Phase One recommendation is forwarded to Regional Council and that Committee of the Whole rules apply to the debate on the matter. The Executive Standing Committee has a public participation component on each regular meeting agenda allowing further opportunity for the public to engage prior to debate on the final recommendation at Regional Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff will require the services of a third-party public engagement firm to conduct the public engagement activities related to Phase One of the 2022 Municipal District Boundary project. The amount of \$100,000 has been included in the proposed 2022/2023 operational budget in A125 – 6399 (Elections – Contract Services). Funding from reserve account Q511 - Election Reserve is included in 2022/23 reserve budget.

Staff have awarded Narrative Research Associates with a contract to develop a survey and assist with the collection and analysis of data from the public engagement activities related to Phase One. The cost for these services is \$35,353 net HST included. This funding is accounted for in the 2022/2023 operational budget, A125 – 6399 (Elections – Contract Services).

RISK CONSIDERATION

The District Boundary Review is a legislatively required action. Staff are recommending that Phase One of the District Boundary review project be complete on or before May 31, 2022 to ensure that the project remains on track to meet the NSUARB application deadline of December 31, 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Phase One of the District Boundary Review will include a public engagement component. Staff are recommending the development of a Survey, four interactive public participation meetings hosted by each Community Council to gather public input on the size and governance model for Halifax Regional Council. The themes collected from this engagement will be captured in the "what we heard" reports, analyzed and used to inform the recommendation report to Regional Council on Phase One. Staff are recommending that a third-party public engagement specialist develop the survey, analyze the data collected and compile the "what we heard reports".

Staff are further recommending the development of a comprehensive communications plan for Phase One of the District Boundary Review project. This communications plan will advise and inform the public on the purpose of the District Boundary Review and how they can engage in the process in simple and accessible language. The Communications strategy will include print ads in media outlets across the municipality, a poster campaign, and graphic communications on HRM's digitalized screens. Additionally, information on

the District Boundary Review will be communicated through HRM's social media accounts and posted online at <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/elections/district-boundary-review>.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Executive Standing Committee could recommend amendments to the proposed public engagement process for Phase One of the District Boundary Review Project. This course of action may require further analysis by staff.

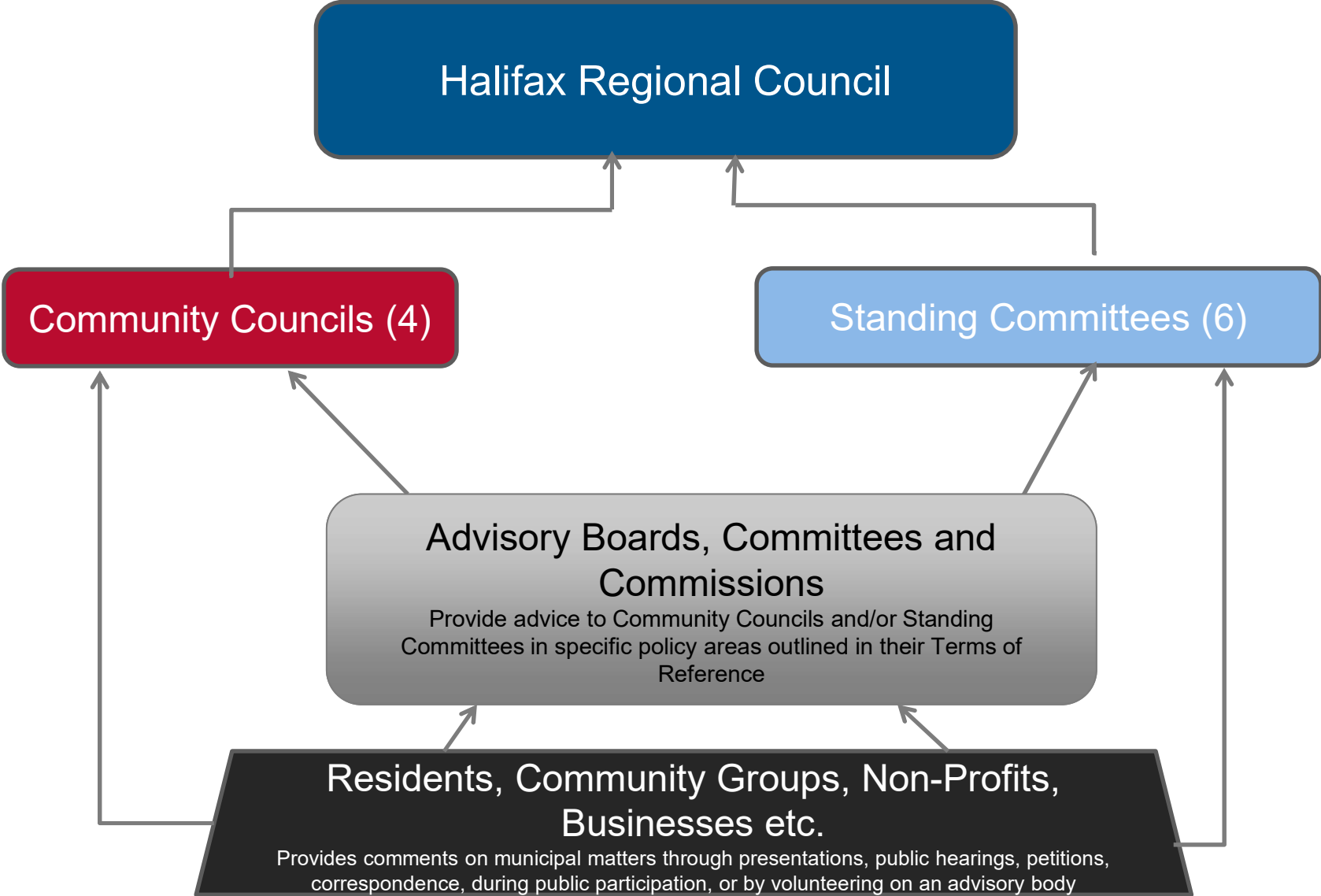
ATTACHMENTS

1. Governance Structure of the Halifax Regional Municipality
2. Population by District and Estimate Voters (2024)
3. Proposed timeline for Phase One of the District Boundary Review Study

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Iain MacLean, Municipal Clerk, 902.490.6456
 Liam MacSween, Elections and Special Projects Manager, 902.233.5207

Governance Structure



ATTACHMENT 2: POPULATION BY DISTRICT AND ESTIMATED VOTERS (2024)

District	Population	Estimated Voter (2024)	Percentage Deviation
1	23685	19740	-15.5
2	27185	23315	-1.9
3	31384	26238	13.3
4	25963	21911	-7.2
5	29587	26195	0.7
6	26403	22667	-5.7
7	26997	25287	-3.5
8	29002	26123	4.7
9	29651	25444	7.1
10	27048	23420	-3.3
11	27605	23243	-0.7
12	30562	25844	10.4
13	28532	23128	3
14	25242	20534	-9.9
15	22480	19159	18.2
16	31763	26700	14.7
TOTAL	443089	378948	
DISTRICT AVERAGE		27693.0625	

“The Environics 2020 enriched demographic data uses the 2016 Statistics Canada Census data as its base data. Demographic projections are based on comprehensive methodologies to determine current and future demographic populations. Environics Analytics is the owner of all enriched data and the data should not be available for distribution”

Current Voters (18 and over)			Voters 2024 (15 and up now)		
18772	0.837808964	0.162191036	19740	0.833465278	0.166534722
22297	0.995132456	0.004867544	23315	0.98440947	0.01559053
24475	1.09233829	-0.09233829	26238	1.10782482	-0.10782482
20909	0.933184936	0.066815064	21911	0.925129569	0.074870431
25167	1.123222788	-0.123222788	26195	1.106009268	-0.106009268
21651	0.966300973	0.033699027	22667	0.957049516	0.042950484
23432	1.045788389	-0.045788389	25287	1.067671554	-0.067671554
23942	1.068550085	-0.068550085	26123	1.102969273	-0.102969273
24121	1.076538995	-0.076538995	25444	1.074300432	-0.074300432
22462	1.002496534	-0.002496534	23420	0.988842796	0.011157204
22243	0.992722394	0.007277606	23243	0.981369475	0.018630525
24239	1.081805427	-0.081805427	25844	1.091189292	-0.091189292
21689	0.967996943	0.032003057	23128	0.976513928	0.023486072
19499	0.870255539	0.129744461	20534	0.866989666	0.133010334
18323	0.817769744	0.182230256	19159	0.808934207	0.191065793
25276	1.128087543	-0.128087543	26700	1.127331454	-0.127331454
TOTAL: 358497			TOTAL: 378948		
DISTRICT AVERAGE: 22406.0625			DISTRICT AVERAGE: 23684.25		

TOTAL POPULATION	443,089
Total Voters	378,948
Districts	16
Population/Dist.	27,693
Voters/Dist.	23,684
Above 10%	26,053
Below 10%	21,316

District Boundary Review Timeline – Phase One






P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 12.1.1
Executive Standing Committee
March 28, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:  (Original Signed)

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 1, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 District Boundary Review – Phase One

ORIGIN

On December 14, 2021 Halifax Regional Council designated Executive Standing Committee (ESC) to undertake Phase One of the District Boundary Review and bring forward a recommendation to Regional Council on or before May 31, 2022, with regard to the number of Municipal Polling Districts appropriate to regional decision making, including a Community Council governance structure for the HRM.

On February 28, 2022 Executive Standing Committee approved in principle the 2022 District Boundary Review Public Engagement process and timeline for Phase One as described in the discussion section and attachment three of the January 18, 2022 staff report.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section S. 364 of the Halifax Regional Municipal Charter states:

Part XVI of the Municipal Government Act applies to the Municipality. 2008, c.39, s364

Part XVI at S. 369 of the Municipal Government Act provides:

369(1) In the year 1999, and in the year 2006 and every eight years thereafter the council shall conduct a study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness and the number of councillors.

(2) After the study is completed and before the end of the year in which the study was conducted the council shall apply to the Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Executive Standing Committee:

1. Approve the proposed Phase One survey questions and revised public engagement timeline as outlined in the discussion section and attachments of this report.
2. Recommend that Halifax Regional Council extend the time for the Executive Standing Committee to bring forward a recommendation to Regional Council regarding Phase I of the District Boundary Review to June 14, 2022

BACKGROUND

On February 28, 2022 Executive Standing Committee approved in principle the Phase One Study Public Engagement process and timeline for the 2022 District Boundary Review project. The public engagement process for Phase One includes the following:

- The development of a survey which seeks feedback from the public on the size of Council and governance structure of HRM;
- Individual interviews with members of Regional Council;
- Public Information meetings hosted by HRM's Community Councils;
- Corresponding and engaging with the Executive Standing Committee via public participation.

The role of Executive Standing Committee within this process is as follows:

- Advise on the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the existing governance model for Regional Council,
- Provide direction and confirmation on public engagement activities as well as required information for evaluation,
- Participate in the public engagement sessions,
- Receive "what we heard" reports from phase one of public engagement and provide feedback prior to a formal submission to Regional Council
- Provide a recommendation, based on public consultation, to Regional Council on the recommended number of polling districts and governance structure on or before May 31, 2022.

DISCUSSION

Phase One of the District Boundary Review is intended to review governance structure of the HRM and Regional Council Governance and provide a recommendation, with rationale, for the final number of Councillors and polling districts for the HRM. The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) has indicated that this should include an evaluation of what is required for effective political management, effective representation, and accountability. Staff on behalf of the Executive Standing Committee have retained Narrative Research to develop a survey and assist with the public engagement activities related to Phase One.

Phase Two, which is being initiated during Phase One, will look at specific polling district boundaries across the municipality. This phase focuses on the distribution of polling districts within the HRM in accordance with the provisions of section 368(4) of the MGA and considers the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, communities of interest, and geographic size. On February 8, 2022, Halifax Regional Council approved Administrative Order 2022-001-GOV respecting the creation of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel. This panel will be responsible for recommending adjustments to the existing boundaries in accordance with the objectives set out in the MGA and the direction provided

by Regional Council from Phase One of the review as well as the feedback from public consultation. It is anticipated that the Panel will be operational by May 2022.

The NSUARB's jurisdiction to deal with the Municipality's application is limited to that which is set out in the legislation. The Board does not have jurisdiction to amend legislation or to consider proposals with respect to the number of councillors and polling districts, or the boundaries of the polling districts, that are not enabled under the current legislative framework.

On February 28, 2022 Executive Standing Committee approved in principle the 2022 Public Engagement process for Phase One. This report provides additional information relative to phase one for consideration by the Executive Standing Committee, items related to that process and presents a revised timeline for the public engagement activities and reporting activities.

i. Draft Survey Questions:

Narrative Research, in consultation with staff and members of the Executive Standing Committee have developed a list of questions for a public survey which seeks feedback on resident's experiences interacting with Council and the municipality. For further information, please refer to attachment one of this report. The proposed survey provides background information on the services provided by the municipality, Council's governance structure, the current number of Councillors and the number of residents represented in each electoral district. It is designed to gain measurable data with respect to the level of resident knowledge with municipal services and their experience interacting with Council, Community Councils and Committees. Additionally, the survey solicits specific feedback from the public on the appropriate size of Council and how many residents should be represented by an elected official within a given electoral district. The data collected from this survey will inform the "what we heard report" and will provide the Executive Standing Committee with insight from the public when considering its recommendation to Regional Council on the size and governance structure for Halifax Regional Council.

ii. Jurisdictional Scan – Comparable Municipalities and Provincial/Federal Electoral Representation Comparison

Staff have prepared additional demographic information relative to Phase One of the review. A jurisdictional scan of fourteen (14) comparable municipalities in Canada has been completed, of which the Halifax Regional Municipality ranks ninth (9th) with respect to overall population. This scan utilizes census data from 2021 and includes comparative information such as the population of each Canadian municipality, the number of Councillors and electoral districts which are represented, the change in population growth from 2016-2021, and percentage of overall population represented in each district. It should be noted that this information is being provided for comparative and contextual purposes. This jurisdictional scan does not include an overview of the number of electors per district or an overview of the legislative and administrative frameworks of each jurisdiction which differs from province to province. However, the municipalities that are presented are similar in that each jurisdiction elects one representative per electoral district. For the purposes of the District Boundary application, the NSUARB does not focus entirely on the population of each district, but rather the number of electors per district. In its 2011 decision, the NSUARB notes the appropriateness of including comparable jurisdictions within the study:

[163] One of the issues the Board must consider is the number of electors. The total number of electors is a consideration clearly related to the number of electors in each polling district. The Board considers it is appropriate to take into account what other comparable jurisdictions consider to be reasonable with respect to council size and the number of electors per polling district, especially when the comparator cities are used by HRM for other purposes¹.

¹ 2011 NSUARB 119, <https://www.canlii.org/en/ns/nsuarb/doc/2011/2011nsuarb119/2011nsuarb119.html>, paragraph 163.

In addition to comparative municipalities across Canada, staff have also included a breakdown of federal and provincial electoral representation within the Halifax Regional Municipality. This information includes electoral counts for the provincial electoral districts within the boundaries of HRM and both population and electoral counts for federal electoral districts within the boundaries of HRM. Elections Nova Scotia does not maintain population statistics for the 55 Electoral Districts in Nova Scotia; however, Elections Nova Scotia does maintain a record of active electors which has been included in attachment three (3) of this report. To determine the average population for Nova Scotia's 55 electoral districts, staff have provided an approximate number of 17,625 residents. This number was derived using the 2021 Census population for the province of Nova Scotia of 969,383 and calculating the average number of residents per district over the 55 electoral districts. This information is intended to provide additional context for other orders of government within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The data respecting the current and projected number of electors for HRM, included in attachment three (3), are projections based on 2016 Census Data. Due to the timing of the 2021 Census release, the data is still being assessed by staff to determine a district-by-district breakdown relative to the population and projected number of electors by 2024. It is anticipated that this information will be available by late April 2022 and will be available for Phase Two of the Boundary Review project.

iii. Revised timeline

To achieve the desired outcomes for Phase One of the District Boundary Review study, it is necessary to adjust the timeline slightly from that which was presented by in the January 18, 2022 staff report at the February 28, 2022 Executive Standing Committee meeting. Staff are proposing that the survey, conducted by Narrative Research now run from April 4 to April 18, 2022. The proposed public engagement meetings hosted by Community Council will run from April 7 to April 27, 2022. Staff are also recommending that Halifax Regional Council adjust the timeline for deliberation of the final report from the Executive Standing Committee on the required number of electoral districts and governance structure to the June 14, 2022 meeting of Regional Council from the May 31, 2022 meeting. These timeline amendments are being proposed to allow for the development and promotion of the survey and public engagement meetings hosted by Community Council. Attachment four (4) of this report provides an overview of this revised timeline.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The District Boundary Review is a legislatively required action. Staff are recommending that Phase One of the District Boundary review project be complete on or before June 14, 2022 to ensure that the project remains on track to meet the NSUARB application deadline of December 31, 2022.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Phase One of the District Boundary Review includes a public engagement component which includes a survey developed by Narrative Research and four interactive public participation meetings hosted by each Community Council to gather public input on the size and governance model for Halifax Regional Council. The themes collected from this engagement will be captured in "what we heard" reports, analyzed and used to inform the recommendation report to Regional Council on Phase One.

A communications plan for Phase One of the District Boundary Review project has been developed in consultation with HRM Corporate Communications. This communications plan advises and informs the public on the purpose of the District Boundary Review and how they can engage in the process in simple

and accessible language. The Communications strategy will include print ads in media outlets across the municipality, graphic communications on HRM's digitalized screens, and a comprehensive social media campaign. Additionally, information on the District Boundary Review will be communicated through HRM's social media accounts and posted online at www.halifax.ca/boundaryreview.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Executive Standing Committee may choose to amend the proposed survey questions or to recommend to Regional Council a different the time for the Executive Standing Committee to bring forward a recommendation to Regional Council regarding Phase One of the District Boundary review. Depending on the nature of the proposed amendments, additional analysis from staff may be required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Survey Questions (Narrative Research)
2. Jurisdictional Scan of Comparable Canadian Municipalities, Electoral Districts and Representation
3. Provincial and Federal Electoral Districts Comparison
4. Revised Public Engagement Timeline

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Liam MacSween, Elections and Special Projects Manager, 902.233.5207



Welcome & Introduction

Thank you for helping us shape our municipality by taking our survey!

The topic of this survey is regarding the **Halifax Municipal Council**. You do not need to be an expert on the subject to take part in the survey and we would like to hear from as many residents as possible!

Please note, you do not need to be a Canadian citizen or have voted in a past election to take part – all are welcome.

This survey should take you about 10 minutes to complete and all your responses will be kept strictly anonymous. No effort will be made to identify anyone who completes the survey.

At this time, we are seeking the opinions of residents of Halifax Regional Municipality aged 14 and older.

We appreciate your feedback! **All who complete the survey will be able to opt in to draw for a \$100 (delivered e-transfer).**

Section S: Screener

S1. How old are you? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. Under 14 **THANK AND TERMINATE**
2. 14 – 17 years old
2. 18 – 34 years old
3. 35 – 54 years old
4. 55 – 74 years old
5. 75 or older
9. Prefer not to say

Section A: Baseline Knowledge Determination

A1. To the best of your knowledge, how many municipal councillors make up the Halifax Regional Council? **ALLOW NUMERIC RESPONSE ONLY, IN RANGE OF 1-999**

RECORD ANSWER: _____

A2. To the best of your knowledge, in which district of Halifax Regional Municipality do you currently live? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. **District 1:** Waverly – Fall River – Musquodoboit Valley
2. **District 2:** Preston – Chezzetcook – Eastern Shore
3. **District 3:** Dartmouth South – Eastern Passage
4. **District 4:** Cole Harbour – Westphal – Lake Loon – Cherry Brook

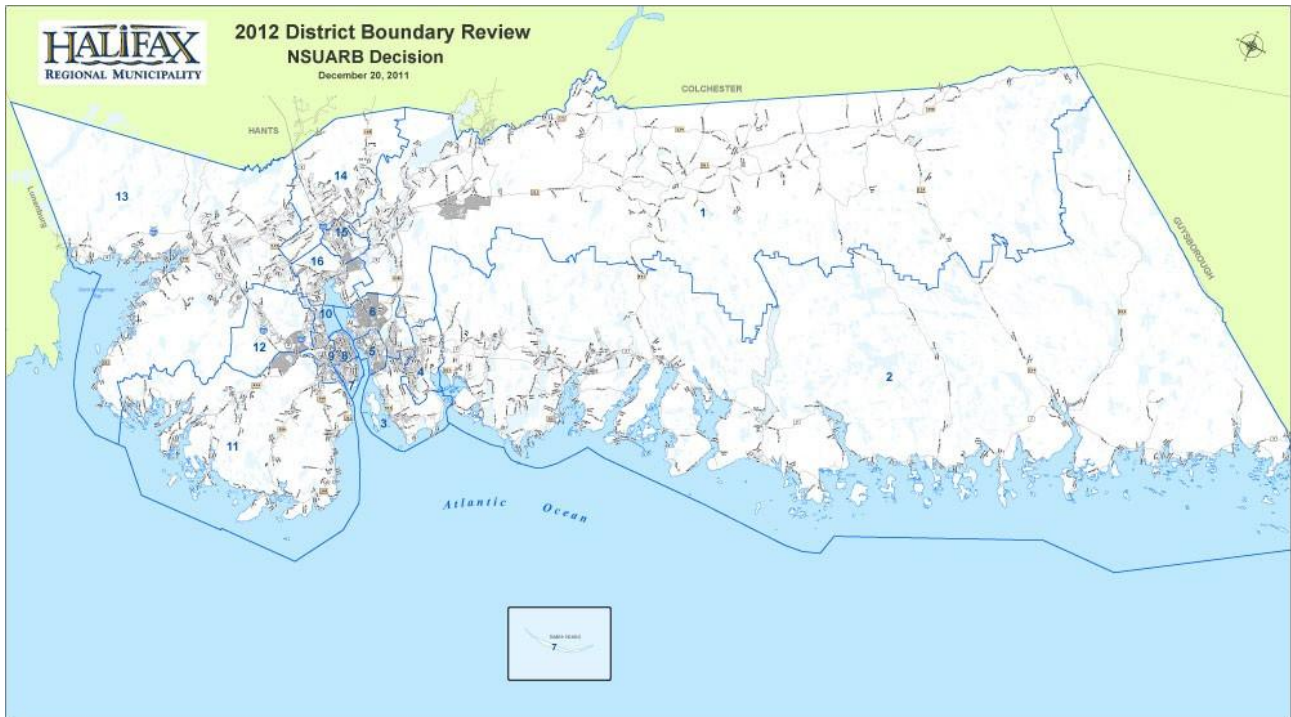
5. **District 5:** Dartmouth Centre
6. **District 6:** Harbourview – Burnside – Dartmouth East
7. **District 7:** Halifax South Downtown
8. **District 8:** Halifax Peninsula North
9. **District 9:** Halifax West Armdale
10. **District 10:** Halifax – Bedford Basin West
11. **District 11:** Spryfield – Sambro Loop – Prospect Road
12. **District 12:** Timberlea – Beechville – Clayton Park – Wedgewood
13. **District 13:** Hammonds Plains – St. Margaret’s
14. **District 14:** Middle/Upper Sackville – Beaver Bank - Lucasville
15. **District 15:** Lower Sackville
16. **District 16:** Bedford – Wentworth
17. I live in the Halifax Regional Municipality but I’m not sure which district I live in
18. I don’t live in the Halifax Regional Municipality **THANK AND TERMINATE**

A3. ONLY ASK IF CODE 17 IN PREVIOUS. SHOW MAP AS IMAGE THAT CAN BE ZOOMED IN ON:

By looking at this map, are you able to indicate which district do you live in?

Note: if you are unable to see the map, please type the name of your community here: _____

Image ID: A white, yellow and blue map of the Halifax Regional Municipality with the title: “2012 District Boundary Review, NSUARB Decision, December 20, 2011”. The map shows the 16 districts within HRM, each with a blue outside border and a blue district number.



1. **District 1:** Waverly – Fall River – Musquodoboit Valley
2. **District 2:** Preston – Chezzetcook – Eastern Shore



- 3. **District 3:** Dartmouth South – Eastern Passage
- 4. **District 4:** Cole Harbour – Westphal – Lake Loon – Cherry Brook
- 5. **District 5:** Dartmouth Centre
- 6. **District 6:** Harbourview – Burnside – Dartmouth East
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- 13. **District 13:** Hammonds Plains – St. Margaret’s
- 14. **District 14:** Middle/Upper Sackville – Beaver Bank - Lucasville
- 15. **District 15:** Lower Sackville
- 16. **District 16:** Bedford – Wentworth
- 17. I’m still not sure

A4. Without looking it up, who is your councillor? **RANDOMIZE ORDER. KEEP 17 LAST – ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

- 1. Councillor Cathy Deagle Gammon
- 2. Councillor David Hendsbee
- 3. Councillor Becky Kent
- 4. Councillor Trish Purdy
- 5. Councillor Sam Austin
- 6. Councillor Tony Mancini
- 7. Councillor Waye Mason
- 8. Councillor Lindell Smith
- 9. Councillor Shawn Cleary
- 10. Councillor Kathryn Morse
- 11. Councillor Patty Cuttell
- 12. Councillor Iona Stoddard
- 13. Councillor Pam Lovelace
- 14. Councillor Lisa Blackburn
- 15. Councillor Paul Russell
- 16. Councillor Tim Outhit
- 17. Not sure

A5. Please respond to each of the following statements with a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’. **RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS - ALLOW ONE RESPONSE PER STATEMENT.**

- a. I am currently eligible to vote in municipal elections
- b. I voted in the last municipal election, held on October 17, 2020
- c. I plan to vote in the next municipal election, which will be held on October 19, 2024
- d. At any point in the past, I have contacted my councillor



- e. At any point in the past, I have attended at least one Council meeting or HRM Committee meeting
 - f. I am aware that information about Council and Committee meetings can be accessed online
 - g. I am aware that I can use 311 to access to municipal services and information
-
- 1. Yes
 - 2. No
 - 3. Not sure

A6. ASK IF YES IN A5e:

Did you attend a Council or HRM Committee meeting in-person, online, or have you attended in both ways?

- 1. In person
- 2. Online
- 3. I've attended both in person and online

A7. ASK IF NO IN A5e. RANDOMIZE ORDER. KEEP OTHER LAST MULTI SELECT:

Why have you not attended a Council or Committee meeting? Select all that apply

- 1. I'm not interested in these types of meetings
- 2. I didn't know that I could attend Council or Committee meetings
- 3. I didn't know where to look up information about attending Council or Committee meetings
- 4. I don't believe Council or Committee meetings are relevant to me personally
- 5. Council and/ or Committee meetings are not scheduled at a time that I could attend
- 6. I'm not able to attend meetings in person
- 7. Another reason (Please specify: _____)

A8. ASK IF CODE 6 – NOT ABLE TO ATTEND IN PERSION IN A7.

If Council and / or Committee meetings could be attended virtually or remotely, meaning that you could not only view, but also participate in meetings remotely, would you attend online?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Not sure
- 4. Depends (Please specify why it depends: _____)

A9. ASK ALL. ALLOW ONE RESPONSE. How knowledgeable do you personally feel about the role and responsibilities of the Halifax Regional Council?

- 1. Extremely knowledgeable
- 2. Somewhat knowledgeable



- 3. Not very knowledgeable
- 4. Not at all knowledgeable

A10. **ASK ALL. RANDOMIZE ORDER, ALLOW ONE RESPONSE PER ITEM.** Prior to today, were you aware that Halifax Regional Council is responsible for the following?

- a. Municipal infrastructure (roads/sidewalks/traffic lights)
 - b. Community & recreation centres
 - c. Garbage collection
 - d. Public library funding
 - e. Public transit
 - f. Land use planning
 - g. Traffic signals
 - h. Police
 - i. Fire services
 - j. Diversity & Inclusion Services
-
- 1. Yes, I was aware
 - 2. No, I was unaware
 - 3. Not sure

Section B: Unaided Views on Halifax Regional Council Structure

B1. As you may be aware, the Halifax Regional Council currently includes 16 councillors and the mayor, who collectively serve approximately 440,000 residents.

Based on what you know or have heard, which best represents your view on the current number of councillors? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

- 1. Too many
- 2. The right amount
- 3. Too few
- 4. Not sure

B2. **[POSE IF CODES 1 OR 3 IN B1]** How many councillors do you think there should be to represent the Halifax Regional Municipality’s population of approximately 440,000? **ALLOW NUMERIC RESPONSE ONLY, IN RANGE OF 1-999**

RECORD ANSWER: _____

B3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Halifax Regional Council – with its 16 councillors who each represent a specific geographic area – adequately represents residents? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

- 1. Completely agree

- 2. Mostly agree
- 3. Mostly disagree
- 4. Completely disagree
- 8. Not sure

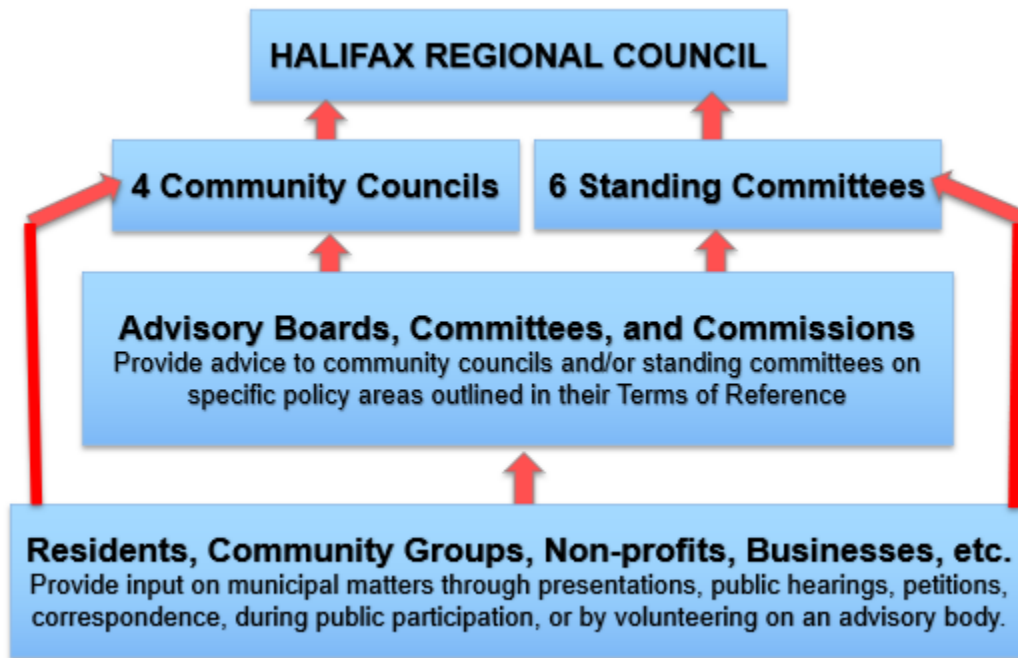
B4. **SKIP IF CODE 8 IN PREVIOUS.** Why do you **[AGREE / DISAGREE]** that Halifax Regional Council – with its 16 councillors who each represent a specific geographic area – adequately represents residents?

- 1. Specify: _____
- 2. Not sure

SECTION C: Aided Views on Halifax Regional Council Structure

- C1. Here is a broad overview of how Halifax Regional Municipality is governed, which includes not only the Halifax Regional Council with its 16 councillors and the Mayor, but also:
- **Four community councils**, that include existing councillors (Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council, Halifax and West Community Council, North West Community Council, Regional Centre Community Council),
 - **Six standing committees**, that include existing councillors (Appeals, Audit & Finance, Community Planning and Economic Development, Environment & Sustainability, Executive and Transportation), and
 - Various Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions, which include both members of Council and residents.

Image ID: A chart showing five blue boxes, with the words “Halifax Regional Council” in the uppermost box, with 4 community councils and 6 standing committees shown in boxes below, with red arrows up to Halifax Regional Council. Below those two boxes is another box that reads: Advisory Boards, Committees, and Commissions: provide advice to community councils and/or standing committees on specific policy areas outlined in their terms of reference. Below that is a final box that reads: Residents, Community Groups, Non-profits, Businesses, etc.: Provide input on municipal matters through presentations, public hearings, petitions, correspondence, during public participation, or by volunteering on an advisory body.



With this additional information, to what extent do you agree or disagree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. Completely agree
2. Mostly agree
3. Mostly disagree
4. Completely disagree
8. Not sure

C2a. [SHOW ON SAME SCREEN AS C1. POSE IF CODE 1 OR 2 IN C1] Why do you agree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents?

RECORD ANSWER: _____

C2b. [SHOW ON SAME SCREEN AS C1. POSE IF CODE 3 OR 4 IN C1] Why do you disagree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents?

RECORD ANSWER: _____

C3. Halifax Regional Municipality has approximately 440,000 residents and 16 councillors / districts. Here are some comparably sized municipalities and cities in Canada along with the number of districts they currently have.

Municipality	Population (2021)	Number of Districts	Number of Residents per District
Winnipeg	749,607	15	49,974
Hamilton	568,353	15	37,890
Quebec City	549,459	21	26,165
Halifax	439,819	16	27,489
Laval	438,366	21	20,874
London	422,324	14	30,166
Gatineau	291,041	19	15,318
Saskatoon	266,141	10	26,614

Seeing these comparisons, which best represents your view on ratio, or the number of councillors relative to residents in HRM? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. HRM has too many councillors
2. HRM has the right number of councillors
3. HRM has too few councillors
8. Not sure

C4. **[POSE IF CODES 1 OR 3 IN C3. SHOW ON SAME SCREEN AS C3]** How many councillors do you think there should be in HRM? **ALLOW NUMERIC RESPONSE ONLY, IN RANGE OF 1-999**

RECORD ANSWER: _____

C5a. Currently, councillors on Halifax Regional Council each represent a range of 20,000 to 31,000 residents.

Which one of the following statements best represents your thoughts about the proportion of councillors to residents in Halifax Regional Municipality? Should each councillor represent more or fewer residents? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. Councillors should represent *more* residents
2. Councillors currently represent the right number of residents
3. Councillors should represent *fewer* residents
4. Not sure



C5b. Councillors on Halifax Regional Council each represent an average of 22,406 electors. By comparison, Members of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia (the Provincial Government) represent approximately 14,716 electors on average.

Based on the information about the responsibilities of the Municipality above, and your knowledge of the role of the Provincial government....Knowing this, which one of the following statements best represents your thoughts about the proportion of councillors to residents in Halifax Regional Municipality? Should each councillor represent more or fewer residents? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. Councillors should represent *more* residents
2. Councillors currently represent the right number of residents
3. Councillors should represent *fewer* residents
4. Not sure

C6. There are different ways that boundaries of districts can be determined within the Municipality. There are five different criteria that the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board has indicated must be considered when determining the districts.

In your view, how important are each of the following criteria in determining how the boundaries of districts are determined within the Halifax Regional Municipality? **ONE RESPONSE PER ITEM. ROTATE A-E, KEEP NOT SURE LAST IN SCALE.**

- a. By **geography**
 - b. By **number of electors** in each district
 - c. **Communities of Interest** (an area’s history, ethnic origin, language, or other factors such as recreational issues, planning boundaries, tax rates, services or other specific needs)
 - d. **Population Density**
 - e. **Relative parity of voting power**
1. Extremely important
 2. Somewhat important
 3. Not very important
 4. Not important at all
 5. Not sure

C7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE PER, POSE AS GRID**

- a. My councillor is responsive to the needs of my community
 - b. I know how to reach my councillor if I have a question or issue
1. Completely agree
 2. Somewhat agree
 3. Somewhat disagree
 4. Completely disagree
 5. Not sure

**C8. ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

Since the pandemic began, do you feel more engaged, less engaged, or neither more nor less engaged than prior to the pandemic?

1. More engaged
2. As engaged
3. Less engaged

C9. ALLOW ONE RESPONSE

Since the pandemic began, would you rate your municipal councillor as doing a better job, a worse job, or neither better nor worse job representing you on Halifax Regional Council?

1. Better job
2. Neither better nor worse
3. Worse job
4. Not sure

Section E: Classification Questions and Closing

We now have a few questions that will help us to better understand results, and to ensure we are hearing from a diverse group. However, please note that none of these questions are mandatory, so please select 'prefer not to answer' if you would like, for any of the following questions.

E1. Do you own or rent your home? SELECT ONE ONLY

1. Own
2. Rent
3. Prefer not to answer

E2. What is your gender identity? MULTI SELECT

1. Cis Woman
2. Cis Man
3. Trans Woman - Trans Feminine
4. Trans Man - Trans Masculine
5. Two-spirit
6. Non-Binary, Gender-fluid, Gender Non-Conforming, or Genderqueer
7. Another gender not listed above. Please specify _____
8. Prefer not to answer

E3. Are you eligible to vote in the upcoming municipal election on October 19, 2024? Note that to vote in municipal elections, you must be a Canadian Citizen, you must have been a resident of HRM for the 6 months prior to the election and must be at least 18 years old.

1. Yes, I will be eligible to vote in the municipal election on October 19, 2024



- 2. No, I will not be eligible to vote in the municipal election on October 19, 2024
- 3. I'm not sure
- 4. Prefer not to answer

So that we can ensure our results reflect a diverse group of residents, we have a few questions about racial identity and ethnic origins. As background, the term *race* is understood today as primarily a sociological designation that identifies a group sharing some outward physical characteristics and some commonalities of culture and history, while *ethnicity* is a word for something you acquire based on where your family is from and the group which you share cultural, traditional, and familial bonds and experiences with. The end result: people may have racial similarity but ethnic dissimilarity.

E4. **ASK ALL. RANDOMIZE ORDER. KEEP OTHER AND PREFER NOT TO SAY LAST.** Which racial identity best describes you? Please check all that apply.

- 1. Caucasian/White
- 2. Black
- 3. First Nations/Inuit/Métis
- 4. Asian (including South Asian)
- 5. Hispanic/Latino
- 6. Middle Eastern
- 7. Mixed Race/Multiracial
- 8. Other. Please specify: _____
- 9. Prefer not to answer

E5. **ASK ALL. RANDOMIZE ORDER. KEEP OTHER AND PREFER NOT TO SAY LAST.** What is your ethnic identity? Please check all that apply. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list of ethnic identities

- 1. African Nova Scotian
- 2. African Canadian
- 3. Afro-Caribbean
- 4. African Descent
- 5. European Descent
- 6. South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- 7. Latinx (e.g. Latin American, Hispanic)
- 8. Middle Eastern (Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian, etc)
- 9. Acadian
- 10. Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
- 11. West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghani, etc.)
- 12. East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)
- 13. Polynesian (Hawaiian, Samoan, etc.)
- 14. Prefer not to answer
- 15. My ethnic identity is not listed above Please specify:

E6. Do you identify as someone with a disability?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Prefer not to answer



E7. How long have you personally lived in the Halifax Regional Municipality? **ALLOW ONE RESPONSE**

1. Less than two years
2. At least 2 years, but less than 5 years
3. At least 5 years, but less than 10 years
4. At least 10 years, but less than 15 years
5. 15 years or more
6. Prefer not to answer

E8. Do you have any other comments about the topics in this survey?

1. Yes: (Please specify:
2. No

PD. Thank you for completing our survey! Would you like to be entered into a draw for a \$100 (prize to be distributed via e-transfer)?

1. Yes [collect name, email, phone]
2. No

IF YES:

*Thank you for participating in our survey!
You will be entered into a draw for a chance to win a \$100!*

IF NO:

*That concludes the survey.
Thank you for your time and input, it is greatly appreciated.*

Attachment 2

HALIFAX

Municipal Jurisdictional Review

2021 Census

Comparable Canadian Municipalities and Electoral Districts

	Municipality	Population 2021 Census	% of Growth from 2016 to 2021	# of Districts
1	Toronto	2,794,356	2.3%	25
2	Calgary	1,306,784	5.5%	14
3	Ottawa	1,017,449	8.9%	23
4	Edmonton	1,010,899	8.3%	11
5	Winnipeg	749,607	6.3%	15
6	Mississauga	717,961	-0.5%	11
7	Hamilton	569,353	6.0%	15
8	Quebec City	549,459	3.3%	21
9	Halifax Regional Municipality	438,819	9.1%	16



City Council comprised of 1 councilor elected per district

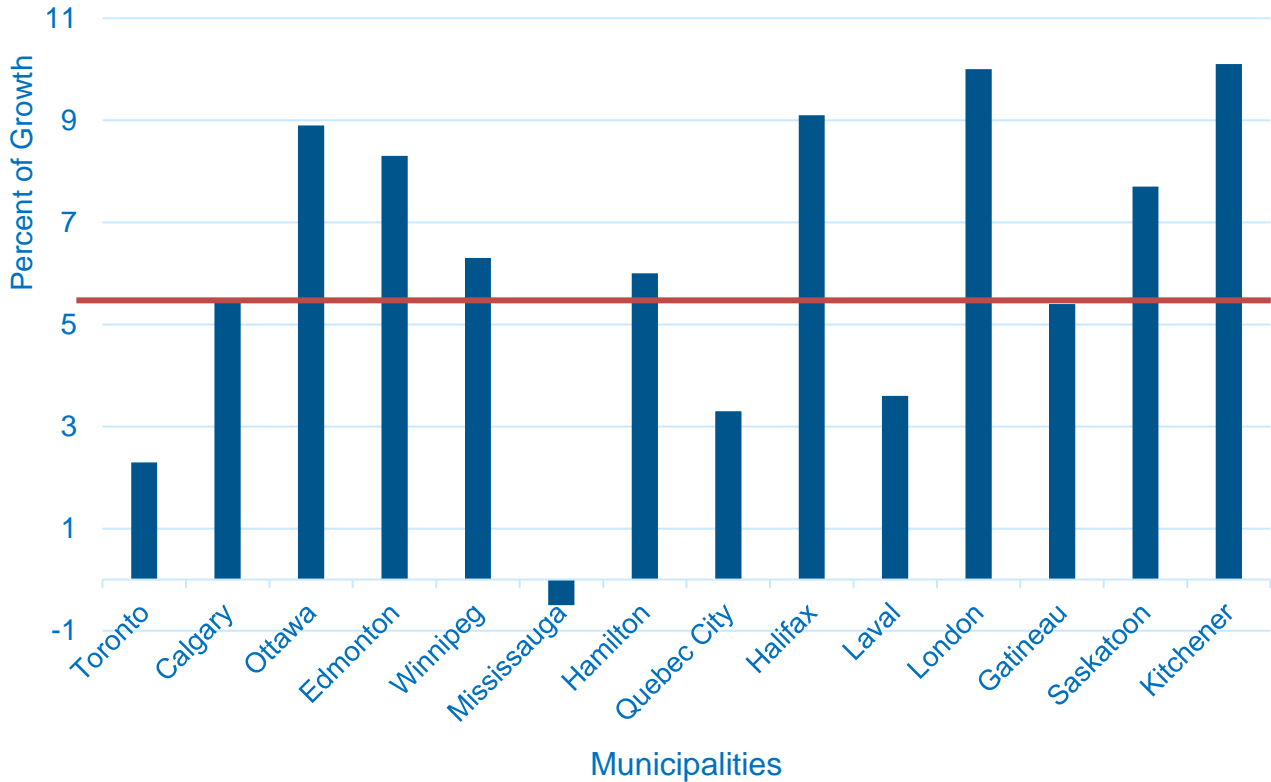
Comparable Canadian Municipalities and Electoral Districts (Continued)

	Municipality	Population 2021 Census	% of Growth from 2016 to 2021	# of Districts
10	Laval	438,366	3.6%	21
11	London	422,324	10.0%	14
12	Gatineau	291,041	5.4%	19
13	Saskatoon	266,141	7.7%	10
14	Kitchener	256,885	10.1%	10



City Council comprised of 1 councilor elected per district

Percent of Population Growth from 2016 to 2021



Canadian Municipalities' Population by Electoral District

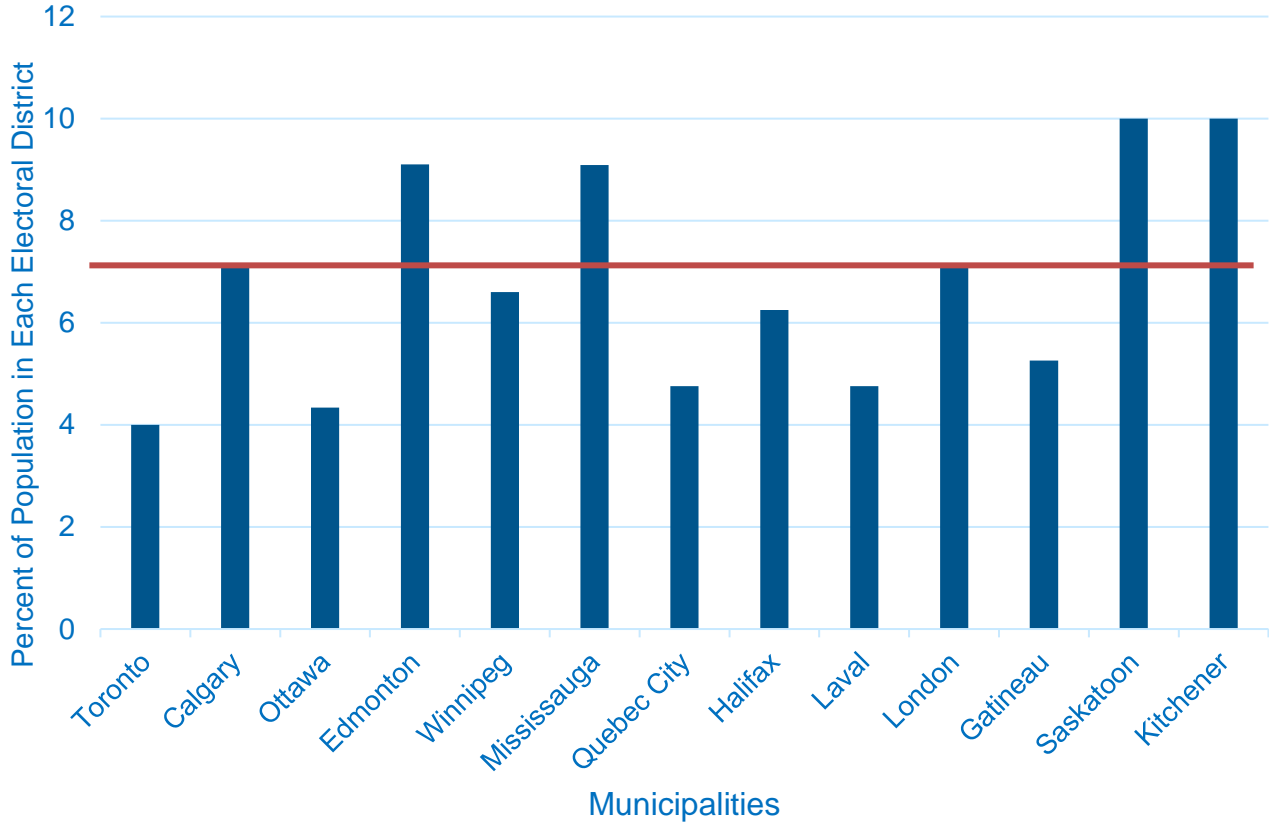
	Municipality	Population	ED	Average Population per ED	% of Pop per ED
1	Toronto	2,794,356	25	111,775	4.0%
2	Calgary	1,306,784	14	93,342	7.14%
3	Ottawa	1,017,449	23	44,237	4.34%
4	Edmonton	1,010,899	11	91,900	9.1%
5	Winnipeg	749,607	15	49,974	6.6%
6	Mississauga	717,961	11	65,269n	9.09%
7	Hamilton	569,353	15	37,890	5.7%

Canadian Municipalities' Population by Electoral District (Continued)

	Municipality	Population	ED	Population per ED	% of Pop per ED
8	Quebec City	549,459	21	26,165	4.76%
9	Halifax	439,819	16	27,489	6.25%
10	Laval	438,366	21	20,874	4.76%
11	London	422,324	14	30,166	7.14%
12	Gatineau	291,041	19	15,318	5.26%
13	Saskatoon	266,141	10	26,614	10.0%
14	Kitchener	256,885	10	25,689	10.0%

5

Percent of Population Per Electoral District (2021 Census)



Provincial and Federal Electoral Districts Comparison

Provincial Electoral District with the Halifax Regional Municipality	Number of Active Electors
Bedford Basin	12,991
Bedford South	14,586
Clayton Park West	14,331
Cole Harbour	10,034
Cole Harbour-Dartmouth	16,057
Dartmouth East	14,526
Dartmouth North	16,116
Dartmouth South	13,754
Eastern Passage	10,506
Eastern Shore	16,814
Fairview-Clayton Park	15,774
Halifax Armdale	14,185
Halifax Atlantic	16,184
Halifax Chebucto	12,965
Halifax Citadel-Sable Island	18,237
Halifax Needham	17,172
Hammonds Plains-Lucasville	14,410
Preston	11,110
Sackville-Cobequid	15,248
Sackville-Uniacke	13,859
Timberlea-Prospect	17,339
Waverly-Fall River-Beaver Bank	17,558
Total	323,756
Average	14,716

*Source Elections Nova Scotia – Number of Active Electors as of March 2022

Federal Electoral Districts within the Halifax Regional Municipality	Number of Electors	Population (2016 census)
Central Nova	57,495	71,962
Dartmouth-Cole Harbour	78,000	92,301
Halifax	61,551	94,610
Halifax West	77,487	96,255
Sackville – Preston - Chezzetcook	71,781	86,498
South Shore St. Margaret's	77,709	91,830
Total	424,023	533,456
Average	70,671	88,909

Source: Elections Canada – Federal Electoral District

<https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/list&document=index338&lang=e#list>

Number of Electors provided by Elections Canada – Federal Electoral Count as of March 2022

HRM Electoral Districts – Projected number of electors	Current Population	Current Number of Electors	Projected Number of Electors by 2024
01-Waverley-Fall River-Musquodoboit Valley	23685	18,772	19,740
02-Preston-Chezzetcook-Eastern Shore	27185	22,297	23,315
03-Dartmouth South-Eastern Passage	31384	24,475	26,238
04-Cole Harbour-Westphal-Lake Loon-Cherry Brook	25963	20,909	21,911
05-Dartmouth Centre	29587	25,167	26,195
06-Harbourview-Burnside-East Dartmouth	26403	21,651	22,667
07-Halifax South Downtown	26997	23,432	25,287
08-Halifax Peninsula North	29002	23,942	26,123
09-Halifax West Armdale	29651	24,121	25,444
10-Halifax Bedford Basin-West	27048	22,462	23,420
11-Spryfield-Sambro Loop-Prospect Road	27605	22,243	23,243
12-Timberlea-Beechville-Clayton Park-Wedgewood	30562	24,239	25,844
13-Hammonds Plains – St. Margarets	28532	21,689	23,128
14-Middle/Upper Sackville – Beaver Bank - Lucasville	25242	19,499	20,534
15-Lower Sackville	22480	18,323	19,159
16-Bedford-Wentworth	31763	25,276	26,700
Total	443089	358,497	378,948
Average	27,693	22,406	23,648

Source: Environics 2020 enriched demographic data uses the 2016 Statistics Canada Census data as its base data. Demographic projections are based on comprehensive methodologies to determine current and future demographic populations.

District Boundary Review Timeline – Phase One (Revised)



Attachment 5

Number of staff reports considered by Council, Community Council and Standing Committees 2018 - 2021

2018	
Destination Body	Number of Reports
Audit and Finance Standing Committee	31
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee	21
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee	10
Executive Standing Committee	8
Halifax and West Community Council	5
Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council	5
North West Community Council	5
Regional Council	144
Transportation Standing Committee	32
Total	261

2019	
Destination Body	Number of Reports
Audit and Finance Standing Committee	27
Committee of the Whole	9
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee	17
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee	9
Executive Standing Committee	10
Halifax and West Community Council	11
Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council	4
North West Community Council	2
Regional Council	140
Transportation Standing Committee	30
Total	259

2020	
Destination Body	Number of Reports
Audit and Finance Standing Committee	17
Committee of the Whole	6
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee	6
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee	6
Executive Standing Committee	4
Halifax and West Community Council	27
Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council	14
North West Community Council	9
Regional Centre Community Centre	3
Regional Council	209
Transportation Standing Committee	30
Total	331

2021	
Destination Body	Number of Reports
Appeals Standing Committee	19
Audit and Finance Standing Committee	25
Committee of the Whole (COW)	11
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee	12
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee	9
Executive Standing Committee	11
Halifax and West Community Council	26
Harbour East-Marine Drive Community Council	25
North West Community Council	27
Regional Centre Community Council	4
Regional Council	175
Transportation Standing Committee	24
Total	368