

Municipality of the County of Richmond **GOVERNANCE AND BOUNDARY REVIEW**

Final Report



PREPARED FOR: THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF RICHMOND
PREPARED BY: STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.,
40 HIGHFIELD PARK DRIVE, DARTMOUTH, NS B2A 0A3
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BOUNDARY REVIEW**
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January 31, 2023

Prepared for:
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Prepared by:
Stantec Consulting Limited

Project Number:
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Richmond Governance and Boundary Review

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Prepared by:


Signature

Printed Name

Reviewed by:

Signature

Printed Name

Approved by:

Signature

Printed Name



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Stantec conducted the previous boundary review for the Municipality of the County of Richmond in 2014. The study was controversial inasmuch as the majority of County Council members at the time disagreed with Stantec's recommendation that Council should consider reducing its membership to five or seven members. Council rejected Stantec's recommendation by a vote of six to four and took an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) to maintain the 10-member Council and the district boundaries that prevailed at the time. The Board, however, did not accept the application and via a decision issued in 2015 reduced Council membership to five members.

PAST BOUNDARY REVIEWS

Richmond conducted boundary reviews in 1994, 1997, 1999, 2008, and 2014. Reviews from 1994 to 2008 confirmed the County's 10-member Council. Stantec's 2014 Report recommended reducing Council to five or seven, but when County Council insisted on applying for ten, the Board chose to reduce Council to its current five members.

CURRENT GOVERNANCE

Richmond is tied with Barrington and Digby with the smallest council among Nova Scotia's 20 rural municipalities. The County ranks seventh in terms of constituents per council member, tenth by land area per district, and third in terms of total municipal expenditure per council member. Like most rural municipalities in Nova Scotia, Richmond has tended to lose population, although it made a slight gain in the most recent census period. Given its relatively older population, we, nevertheless, anticipate continued moderate decline in Richmond's population leading to a loss of 102 residents by 2031.

Council members interviewed were divided between those who favoured continuing with a five-member Council and others who would prefer enlarging Council to seven. Our online Council Size Survey, which drew 106 responses from the public, showed a similar divide. Support for continuing with the current five-member Council was the second most popular response (21.9%), while enlarging Council to seven drew by far the most support (41.7%).

BOUNDARY OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

Following closure of the Council Size Survey, Stantec developed boundary scenarios for the four Council sizes most frequently preferred by survey respondents: 3, 5, 7, and 8 members. We then subjected the options to a multi-criteria matrix assessment applying features for each scenario that reflect the priorities of the NSUARB concerning boundary definition. The five- and seven-district scenarios received the highest ratings.



With the approval of Council, Stantec presented boundary scenarios for five and seven districts to the public in Richmond County through two public meetings and a second online survey. The public meetings were poorly attended and provided limited insight. The online Boundary Options Survey, however, collected 133 responses. The survey presented mapping of the five- and seven-district boundary scenarios created by Stantec. Respondents favoured the seven-district arrangement presented in the survey over the five-district option by 55.9% to 27.5%.

On closure of the Boundary Options Survey, Stantec determined that errors had been made calculating the numbers of electors by district in the seven-district scenario. Richmond County representatives and Stantec's Project Manager agreed that a third survey would be advisable to ensure public choices were based on workable options. Stantec's Project Manager and County representatives then met to revise the boundary scenarios, taking into account comments on boundary issues received through the completed Boundary Options Survey as well as correcting the errors that affected the previously presented seven-district scenario.

The two new scenarios were presented to the public through the Boundaries Decision Survey, which was the third online survey conducted for the project. In contrast to the preceding survey, respondents to the Boundaries Decision Survey favoured the five-district option over seven districts by the narrow margin of just three respondents (57 or 45.6% for five districts and 54 or 43.2% for seven). Additional questions asking respondents for comments on proposed boundaries and the reasons for their boundary option choice suggest that the inability to develop districts confined completely to Isle Madame in the revised scenario contributed to the shift in support. The seven-district arrangement previously put forward showed two districts entirely contained on the island, but it was determined not to be possible while meeting the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion applied by the NSUAR. No doubt other factors also played a part in shifting support.

On closing the Boundary Decision Survey, Stantec reported the results to Council in a draft version of this report submitted on January 19, 2023. We considered after three surveys the results of consultation were inconclusive and recommended that Council choose between five- and seven-district configurations offered in the Boundary Decision Survey.

Council reviewed the report but chose a third course. Council met on Monday, January 23, 2023, and discussed further boundary adjustments with Stantec's Project Manager present. Council members indicated that after direct discussions with residents that they organized during January and consideration of emails and other communication with residents, they would prefer to submit a five-district arrangement that placed two districts on Isle Madame and three on the mainland. Council provided specific direction to Stantec to modify the current electoral boundaries accordingly, also making adjustments to bring all of Grande Greve into District 4. After some exchange with Stantec, Council agreed to move Lynche River from District 4 to District 5 and adjust boundaries as necessary to correspond to Nova Scotia Civic Address File community boundaries.



Council's final recommendation prioritized community of interest over voter parity. Four of five districts fall outside the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion. Feedback from the public indicated that separating the representation of Isle Madame from the mainland was important to many residents, although doing so requires infringement of the parity standard. While four of the five recommended districts fall outside the guidelines set by the NSUARB, the variances are generally moderate, and we are comfortable that the arrangement approved by Council reflects a form of governance desired by Richmond communities.

On January 31, 2023, after reviewing the revised boundary arrangement and variations from the average in the number of electors in each district, Council met again with Stantec's Project Manager present. After a brief discussion of the new boundary scenario, a motion was made to adopt the arrangement as illustrated in **Figure 4-11** of this report and was passed unanimously.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Mandate

Pursuant to Section 369(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), all Nova Scotia municipalities must “conduct a study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness and the number of councillors” ... “in the years 2006 and every eighth year thereafter.” The current year, 2022, starts the fourth cycle since the adoption of the Act.

Stantec conducted the previous boundary review for the Municipality of the County of Richmond in 2014. The study was controversial inasmuch as the majority of County Council members at the time disagreed with Stantec’s recommendation that Council should consider reducing its membership to five or seven members. Council rejected Stantec’s recommendation by a vote of six to four and took an application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) to maintain the 10-member Council that prevailed at the time and the related district boundaries. The Board, however, did not accept the County’s application and via a decision issued in 2015 reduced Council membership to five members to be elected from districts created from pairs of the ten electoral districts existing at the time.

The current study has assessed the Council arrangement and boundaries created by the NSUARB in 2015. It has considered the performance of the County’s smaller Council through comparison to similar Nova Scotia municipalities and consultation with County Council and Richmond residents. Applying the process recommended by the Utility and Review Board, Stantec will determine whether Richmond’s Council should continue with five members or increase or decrease its number of members and will delineate polling district boundaries suitable for electing those members in consideration of criteria set out in Nova Scotia legislation.

1.2 Study Process

Having completed many boundary review studies, Stantec staff are familiar with the specifications of the MGA as well as the NSUARB guidelines and priorities concerning the determination of council size and delineation of related boundaries. The NSUARB User Guide for boundary reviews has prescribed a two-step process for the conduct of polling district boundary reviews. The phases and their scope, as outlined in the Board’s user guide, are as follows:

- **Phase 1 – Number of Councillors** – ... 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.



- **Phase 2 – Boundaries and Polling Districts** – ... the task becomes one of distributing the polling districts to satisfy the objectives listed in s. 368(4) of the Act (number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest and geographic size). Just as with determining the desired number of polling districts, public consultation is essential to a successful process of setting boundaries.¹

Our proposal submitted to the Municipality of the County of Richmond on June 10, 2021, committed to adhere to these specifications. This Boundaries Report is the final project report. At the close of each phase, we have submitted a report summarizing our research and consultation and providing a recommendation. The Phase 1 Council Size Report recommended council sizes and, therefore, the numbers of districts that should be considered in the second phase. This Boundaries Report completes Phase 2 and our project work. It incorporates key information from the Council Size Report with the results of our Phase 2 research and consultation, and concludes with our recommendation for the number of Council members to serve Richmond County and the boundaries of districts from which to elect them.

1.3 Study Conduct

Richmond County notified Stantec of our selection to conduct an electoral boundary review via email on June 17, 2022. Stantec formally began work on the project with a Start-up Meeting on July 14, 2022, although we assembled and began to assess information in the preceding weeks, including our past study for Richmond prepared in 2014 and related map files, and information comparing Nova Scotia municipal councils that we have assembled through other projects. In the balance of July, Stantec interviewed three of five County Councillors as well as the County's CAO.

On July 25, 2022, Stantec, with the assistance of municipal staff, initiated an online survey on Council size for County residents that remained open until August 23, at which time it was closed and results were processed. In addition to the Council Size Survey, Stantec hosted a Council Size Public Meeting in the St. Peters United Church Hall on August 9, 2022.

To close Phase 1, we prepared a Council Size Report, as noted above. The report summarized research and consultation completed in Phase 1 and presented our recommendations concerning council size. The report was completed on September 26 and submitted to Richmond County staff who approved its recommendation to focus boundaries consideration in Phase 2 on five or seven districts.

The recommendation set the framework for developing and assessing electoral boundary options in Phase 2 of the project. In the second phase, we posted a second online survey presenting the boundary options that was open from October 24 to November 27. We also hosted Boundary Options consultation sessions at St. Peters United Church Hall on October 19 and at the New Horizons Hall in Arichat on October 20. Unfortunately, following the public meetings and closure of the online survey, we Stantec

¹ NSUARB, "Municipal Boundary User Guide," no date, p. 2, https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/nsuarb-222634-v1-user_guide_-_mb_reviews_.pdf



determined that the counts of electors by district in the seven-district scenario presented in the survey were incorrect and a third survey would be required. For the additional survey, Stantec with Richmond staff and Council members developed two new boundary arrangements. In addition to correcting the errors in the seven-district scenario both new scenarios considered comments concerning boundaries received through the consultation process. The third survey, which we named the Boundary Decision Survey, provided further information concerning the preferred council size and boundary arrangement for the period from 2022 to 2030; however, Council ultimately decided to develop a third approach that prioritized the frequently expressed concern that districts for Isle Madame should be separate from districts on the mainland.



2 PAST BOUNDARY REVIEWS

For our 2014 Boundaries and Governance Review for Richmond, Stantec reviewed decisions resulting from boundary reviews undertaken in 1994, 1997, 1999, and 2008. The NSUARB also determined the County's current council size and polling district boundaries based on its 2015 application. Following descriptions of the decisions made from 1994 through 2008 are taken from our 2014 report. The summary of the 2015 decision was prepared for this report. Reviews from 1994 to 2008 confirmed the County's 10-member Council. Stantec's 2014 Report recommended reducing Council to five or seven, but when County Council insisted on applying for ten, the Board chose to reduce Council to its current five members.

2.1 1994 Boundary Review

The boundary review in 1994 resulted in the downsizing of Richmond Council from 11 to the current 10 members. The achievement of balance among the ten districts, however, proved to be a major challenge. At the time, the NSUARB had set a standard that the number of voters in each polling district should be within $\pm 25\%$ of the average number of voters in all polling districts within a jurisdiction. Of the ten districts delineated for Richmond in 1994, two

Table 2-1 Voters by Polling District, Richmond County, 1994

Polling District	Voters	Share of Total Voters	Variation from Average	
			Number	%
1 Arichat	830	10.2%	19	2.4%
2 Petit de Grat	1,109	13.7%	298	36.8%
3 d'Escousse	621	7.7%	-190	-23.4%
4 West Arichat	613	7.6%	-198	-24.4%
5 Point Tupper/Evanston	751	9.3%	-60	-7.4%
6 Louisdale	748	9.2%	-63	-7.7%
7 R. Bourgeois/Dundee	761	9.4%	-50	-6.1%
8 St. Peters/Sampsonville	975	12.0%	164	20.3%
9 L'Ardoise	1,019	12.6%	208	25.7%
10 Johnstown/Loch Lomond	680	8.4%	-131	-16.1%
TOTALS	8,107	100.0%		
Average	811			

Source Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 1994

were outside this guideline: one substantially (District 2 with 36.8% more voters than the average) and one marginally (District 9 with 25.7% more). Four more, furthermore, were more than 10% outside the average, with three of those close to the 25% guideline (**Table 2-1**).

The Board commented that its predecessors had tolerated variations of as much as $\pm 33.3\%$ of the average. The 11-person Richmond Council had however been elected from districts that varied by more than 50% from the average in three cases as well as from one district that had 72.1% fewer voters less than the average.



The Board in its decision recognized that the 1994 County Council proposal was an improvement over the previous arrangement but also expressed concern with the arrangement on Isle Madame, which was divided into Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Board’s decision suggested that the four districts could be replaced by three divisions, consistent with an application for eight polling districts made at roughly the same time by the Richmond County School Board.

Ultimately, the Board nevertheless approved the application of County Council. In its decision, the Board acknowledged that the proposal for ten districts was well supported by the public in Richmond and that alternative proposals would tend to split communities of interest and combine “groups that have little in common.” The Board also acknowledged the challenges of dealing with Isle Madame, which it regarded as having “a unique community of interest.”

2.2 1997 Boundary Review

The 1994 NSUARB decision included a requirement that Richmond County make a new application before the 1997 elections to address the Board’s concern with the variance of District 2 from the overall average. To deal with the specifications of the Board, County Council made a serious effort to reduce its membership from ten to five councillors.

The County asked the District Planning Commission to develop a five-district arrangement.

The Commission did so by combining pairs of existing districts; however, the resulting arrangement was not supported by citizens who felt that it did not meet their expectations of service from Council and did not properly represent their communities. Scenarios for seven and eight districts subsequently created by the Commission met with similar responses.

The Board ultimately decided to confirm the ten-member Council and the prevailing polling districts with only a shift of the boundary between Districts 6 and 7 that the written decision does not describe (compare **Table 2-2** with **Table 2-1**, above). With respect to District 2, which was the intended focus of

Table 2-2 Voters by Polling District, Richmond County, 1997

Polling District	Voters	Share of Total Voters	Variation from Average	
			Number	%
1 Arichat	893	10.7%	57	6.9%
2 Petit de Grat	1,042	12.5%	206	24.7%
3 d’Escousse	630	7.5%	-206	-24.6%
4 West Arichat	616	7.4%	-220	-26.3%
5 Point Tupper/Evanston	759	9.1%	-77	-9.2%
6 Louisdale	888	10.6%	52	6.3%
7 R. Bourgeois/Dundee	786	9.4%	-50	-5.9%
8 St. Peters/Sampsonville	1,064	12.7%	228	27.3%
9 L’Ardoise	992	11.9%	156	18.7%
10 Johnstown/Loch Lomond	687	8.2%	-149	-17.8%
TOTALS	8,357	100.0%		
Average	836			

Source Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 2000



the study, the Board noted that the number of voters in the district had fallen in three years. The decision notes that a fish plant had closed in the area and population was expected to decline further, thereby, raising the likelihood that the district would come more into line with the balance of the county.

2.3 1999 Boundary Review

Richmond Council conducted a boundary review in 1999 and confirmed the ten-member council and district boundaries approved in 1997, which were essentially unchanged from 1994 (**Table 2-3**). As in 1994, voter numbers in two council districts exceeded the $\pm 25\%$ guideline, although both variations were only marginally outside the specified range. Also, like 1994, four other districts showed large variations over $\pm 10\%$ with two close to the guideline.

Table 2-3 Voters by Polling District, Richmond County, 1999

Polling District	Voters	Share of Total Voters	Variation from Average	
			Number	%
1 Arichat	893	10.7%	57	6.9%
2 Petit de Grat	1,042	12.5%	206	24.7%
3 d'Escousse	630	7.5%	-206	-24.6%
4 West Arichat	616	7.4%	-220	-26.3%
5 Point Tupper/Evanston	759	9.1%	-77	-9.2%
6 Louisdale	888	10.6%	52	6.3%
7 R. Bourgeois/Dundee	786	9.4%	-50	-5.9%
8 St. Peters/Sampsonville	1,064	12.7%	228	27.3%
9 L'Ardoise	992	11.9%	156	18.7%
10 Johnstown/Loch Lomond	687	8.2%	-149	-17.8%
TOTALS	8,357	100.0%		
Average	836			

Source: Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 2000

As in 1994, the NSUARB expressed concern with the large variations among the districts and, especially, the two that exceeded $\pm 25\%$. The Board did note favourably, however, that the variation of District 2 from average had declined from 36.8% to fall barely within its guidelines at 24.7%, although the reason was the unfortunate decline of the fishery in that area (Petit de Grat) that the Board anticipated in its 1997 decision.

The Board approved the application, noting that while a submission from the Village Commission in St. Peter's requested a reduction in the size of County Council to five members, no speakers at the hearing it held to review the boundary proposal opposed the application. All of what the Board described as "numerous people [who] attended the hearing" spoke in favour of the County's application. The Board noted that "[t]hey rejected any suggestion to reduce or reconfigure polling districts" emphasizing the communities of interest in the county and general satisfaction with the performance of the council at that time.



2.4 2008 Boundary Review

The 2008 boundary review again confirmed the ten-member council that remains in place and is the subject of the current boundary review. Despite adjustments to the boundaries of Districts 1 and 3, and 5 and 6 the proposed districts again exceeded NSUARB guidelines, which by 2004 had been tightened to specify a “target variance” of $\pm 10\%$. The Board at that time specified that any variance in excess of $\pm 10\%$ must be justified in writing to the Board. In its 2004 decision concerning Richmond, the Board specified that a written justification address how “population density, community of interest or geographic size clearly justify the necessity of an increased variance within a polling district.”

Most of the districts delineated by Richmond Council for the 2004 application did not satisfy the $\pm 10\%$ standard. As a matter of fact, two of the ten districts proposed by Richmond Council in 2004 again varied more than 25% from the average of all ten districts and District 10 was close to the long-standing guideline at 23.7% variation. As before, also, four districts, including District 10, fell between the new $\pm 10\%$ guideline and the former 25% rule (**Table 2-4**).

The Board expressed its concern with the large number of districts that did not satisfy its guidelines. It was understanding, however, concerning the challenges that Richmond County presents. The Board recognized that “the extended coastline (both along the ocean and along the Bras d’Or), the presence of island communities like Isle Madame and Janvrin’s Island, together with the extensive rural area in the northern part of the Municipality (e.g., Polling District #10), make it difficult to draw boundaries which respect the communities of interest and also relative parity of voting power.”

Table 2-4 Voters by Polling District, Richmond County, 2008

Polling District	Voters	Share of Total Voters	Variation from Average	
			Number	%
1 Arichat	803	10.4%	31	4.1%
2 Petit de Grat	892	11.6%	120	15.6%
3 d’Escousse	619	8.0%	-153	-19.8%
4 West Arichat	556	7.2%	-216	-28.0%
5 Point Tupper/Evanston	789	10.2%	17	2.2%
6 Louisdale	821	10.6%	49	6.4%
7 R. Bourgeois/Dundee	753	9.8%	-19	-2.4%
8 St. Peters/Sampsonville	1,003	13.0%	231	30.0%
9 L’Ardoise	888	11.5%	116	15.1%
10 Johnstown/Loch Lomond	593	7.7%	-179	-23.2%
TOTALS	7,717	100.0%		
Average	772			

Source Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 2008

The Board also acknowledged the demographic challenges facing Richmond, which are discussed above and were already evident in 2008. Furthermore, as in 1994, the Board observed that the Richmond proposal had attracted no objections and citizens of the area who spoke before the Board on it were generally supportive. The decision noted the effective operation of Richmond County Council, including



the willingness of councillors to make decisions that were contrary to the narrow interests of their district but beneficial to the county as a whole.

The Board consequently approved the application for ten councillors to be elected from the districts now in place for Richmond County stating:

... there is sufficient justification to support the polling district boundaries as they are proposed in the present application. The Board accepts the evidence presented by the Municipality that the proposed changes to the polling district boundaries are consistent with strong communities of interest in the affected areas and, in all cases, the proposed changes were supported by all residents in those areas (in most cases by way of petition).

2.5 2014 Boundary Review

In 2014, Stantec conducted a study of governance and boundary arrangements for the Municipality of the County of Richmond. Study work involved most of the same elements as the current project. Stantec compared the size of Richmond's Council to other rural municipalities in Nova Scotia, consulted the public concerning council size and boundary preferences, and assessed council size and boundary options. Based on research and consultation, which included five open house

Table 2-5 Voters by Polling District, Richmond County, 2012

Polling District	Voters	Share of Total Voters	Variation from Average	
			Number	%
1 Arichat	774	11.0%	73	10.4%
2 Petit de Grat	819	11.7%	118	16.9%
3 d'Escousse	583	8.3%	-118	-16.8%
4 West Arichat	491	7.0%	-210	-29.9%
5 Point Tupper/Evanston	618	8.8%	-83	-11.8%
6 Louisdale	830	11.8%	129	18.4%
7 R. Bourgeois/Dundee	708	10.1%	7	1.0%
8 St. Peters/Sampsonville	908	13.0%	207	29.6%
9 L'Ardoise	736	10.5%	35	5.0%
10 Johnstown/Loch Lomond	541	7.7%	-160	-22.8%
TOTALS	7,008	100.0%		
Average	701			

Source: Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board 2015

sessions conducted in communities across the county at which Stantec presented three boundary scenarios and an online survey that drew 330 responses, we recommended that County Council consider reducing its numbers from ten members to either seven or five.

By a vote of six to four, County Council rejected both options recommended by Stantec in favour of the status quo. Based on Council's decision, the Municipality applied to the NSUARB to continue with ten council members. Council put off boundary changes "to a later date, if need be." With electoral boundaries unchanged, only one electoral district satisfied the $\pm 10\%$ voter parity criterion, with two of the nine outliers more than 25% from the average (Table 2-5).



The application was controversial and the hearing to consider it was complex relative to typical NSUARB proceedings concerning governance and boundary matters. The four councillors who did not support Council's decision submitted a "Minority Report" opposing the County's application. Councillors testified in support and against the application making competing cases that the Board considered before opting for the smaller of the two council sizes recommended for consideration by Stantec, which was the five-member council favoured by the minority councillors.

2.6 Summary

Richmond County historically had a ten-member Council. The Municipality repeatedly applied to maintain its Council membership. In 2015, following a review study conducted by Stantec, Council voted to apply again for ten Council members, despite our recommendation to reduce Council size. Council, furthermore, did not adjust the district boundaries from which members were elected.

The NSUARB rejected Council's application and recommended that Council be reduced to five members. Pairs of existing districts were combined to create the districts. The decision illustrates the ability of the Board to make any decision it considers reasonable within the scope concerning council size and district configuration provided by Provincial legislation as well as the Board's emphasis on consideration of public views over Council views concerning municipal governance arrangements.



3 CURRENT GOVERNANCE

There are no hard and fast rules for determining the number of members a municipal council should have. People who favour larger councils usually cite improved service from councillors who have fewer constituents and, therefore, more time to deal with individual constituent concerns as a key benefit. Many will also argue for more council members where a large geographic territory must be covered and will often add that more voices in council provide more scope for the expression of diverse interests, particularly interests associated with specific geographies. The arguments for smaller councils, by contrast, usually centre on efficiency. Excessive numbers of council members can extend council debates as each member seeks to have his or her say. Additional members also usually require more direct compensation and more municipal staff support, increasing municipal costs that taxpayers must cover.

3.1 Council Size

Under Nova Scotia's *Municipal Government Act* councils must have a minimum of three members, exclusive of a mayor but inclusive of a warden. Towns and regional municipalities must elect a mayor. Rural municipalities have traditionally been led by wardens; however, the MGA in 1999 introduced the option of electing a mayor instead. Among 20 rural municipalities, the Counties of Colchester and Kings, and the Municipal District of Lunenburg are now led by mayors. If a rural municipality chooses to move from a warden to a mayor, the Act provides no means to return to a warden if the municipality later desires to do so. Although towns have the choice to elect council members at large or from wards, rural and regional municipalities are required to elect councillors from districts, with only one councillor permitted per district. The decision to change from a warden to a mayor is not within the scope of this boundary review.

3.1.1 COUNCIL SIZE CONSIDERATIONS

There is no clear consensus as to the optimum size. The appropriate size of a council depends on several issues that at times compete. Certainly, a smaller council will eliminate the costs in salaries, expenses, and overheads that would otherwise be incurred by eliminated council members. On the other hand, the compensation to Nova Scotia municipal representatives, particularly in small towns and rural areas is not great. According to a survey of Nova Scotia municipalities conducted by CBC in 2018, the salary bill for Richmond County, at the time, averaged \$26,570, which ranked fifth among 20 Nova Scotia rural municipalities (i.e., counties and municipal districts) for which CBC obtained data, although it was eleventh when ranked by cost per capita.² Some argue, in any case, that if the number of Council members is decreased, the increased job demands for remaining members will justify higher salaries.

² CBC News, "Search the salaries and costs of Nova Scotia's municipal councils," January 3, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/search-the-salaries-and-costs-of-nova-scotia-s-municipal-councils-1.4470447>. Rankings by Stantec.



Examination of the CBC's data suggests that while there is some justification for this belief, compensation is also influenced by the size of the municipality and lower levels of compensation tend to be associated with municipalities that have smaller populations.

The impact on the workload of council members is nevertheless relevant. More councillors mean more resources available to respond to resident concerns. Many residents feel councillors are more responsive if they must deal with fewer constituents, although some analysts will point out that councillors simply adjust their approach if their responsibilities increase. Council members in larger jurisdictions like HRM, CBRM, and Kings County deal with many more constituents than their counterparts in equivalent municipal classifications (see **Figure 3-1c**, below,) and appear to do so reasonably well, although detailed examination would be necessary to evaluate the situation fully. Some observers suggest that dealing with more constituents keeps councillors from micromanaging municipal affairs, although citizens who want their specific concerns addressed may differ.

Councils are decision-making bodies and studies have assessed the influence of group-size on decision-making. A review of readily available sources suggests that it is desirable to have fewer than 12 people in a decision-making group with most observers favouring numbers between three and eight, based on the "table rule," which suggests that with numbers greater than eight it is difficult to maintain a single conversation within a group. We have found additional sources that state groups of five to seven are the most effective.³ In addition to being manageable numbers, five and seven are odd numbers, which avoids ties, although we have noted that several rural councils in Nova Scotia have even numbers of members and we are not aware of any situation where it has deadlocked council.

It is also noteworthy that municipal councils do not conduct debate and discussion in the same manner as an independent discussion group. The mayor or warden acts as chair and enforces strict rules of order. A concern in less structured decision-making bodies is that dominant voices tend to "steam-roll" more reserved participants. While the phenomenon is not unknown in municipal councils, the process of giving members opportunities to speak individually and limiting the number of times a specific issue can be addressed mitigates this influence. We would hypothesize that such procedures allow a larger group to be managed, although it does not invalidate the benefits of having a membership in the five to seven range.

Proponents of having more rather than less members usually contend more members allow for the expression of diverse perspectives, which is important to ensuring full debate. It is also argued that as decision-making bodies like councils grow, they usually self-organize into groups like political parties that express shared views on most topics. In smaller municipalities like Richmond, though, others might

³ Sheila Margolis, "What Is the Optimal Group Size for Decision-making?," Workplace Culture Institute, LLC, <https://sheilamargolis.com/2011/01/what-is-the-optimal-group-size-for-decision-making/>. Although the summary is a brief popular summary of the issue, the author does cite a Harvard Business Review article, which she says advocates seven as "the optimal size." She then advances her own rationale for favouring five. Another online source that touts "5-7" is Ebrary, "Group Size and Decision Making," https://ebrary.net/2836/management/group_size_decision_making.



counter that five or seven individuals can adequately represent differing perspectives and many would consider that a much larger council in which groups might form around specific issues would be unwieldy and costly for a relatively small number of taxpayers.

One area, however, where we regularly hear concerns from council members in municipalities across the province is the distribution of a small number of council members to boards, committees, and community events. As Richmond County Council members indicated to Stantec through our interview process, Councils are expected to provide representatives on an array of bodies and councillors are expected to represent the Municipality at a wide variety of events. It is reasonable to expect, as councillors from many municipalities regularly tell us, that the attention to these roles will suffer if council members are spread too thinly.

Ultimately, the primary issue in determining the appropriate council size for each municipality is public opinion. Determining the appropriate council size involves trading off service to constituents with efficiency and cost effectiveness. The tradeoff itself is however subject to judgement by the public of what service they expect and how they expect it to be provided. While some constituents may, for example, prioritize attention to their personal concerns or the needs of their neighbourhood, others may prefer to see council emphasize high-level issues and the priorities of the municipality as a whole. Each person, furthermore, likely has a unique take on how the size of council will influence their priorities.

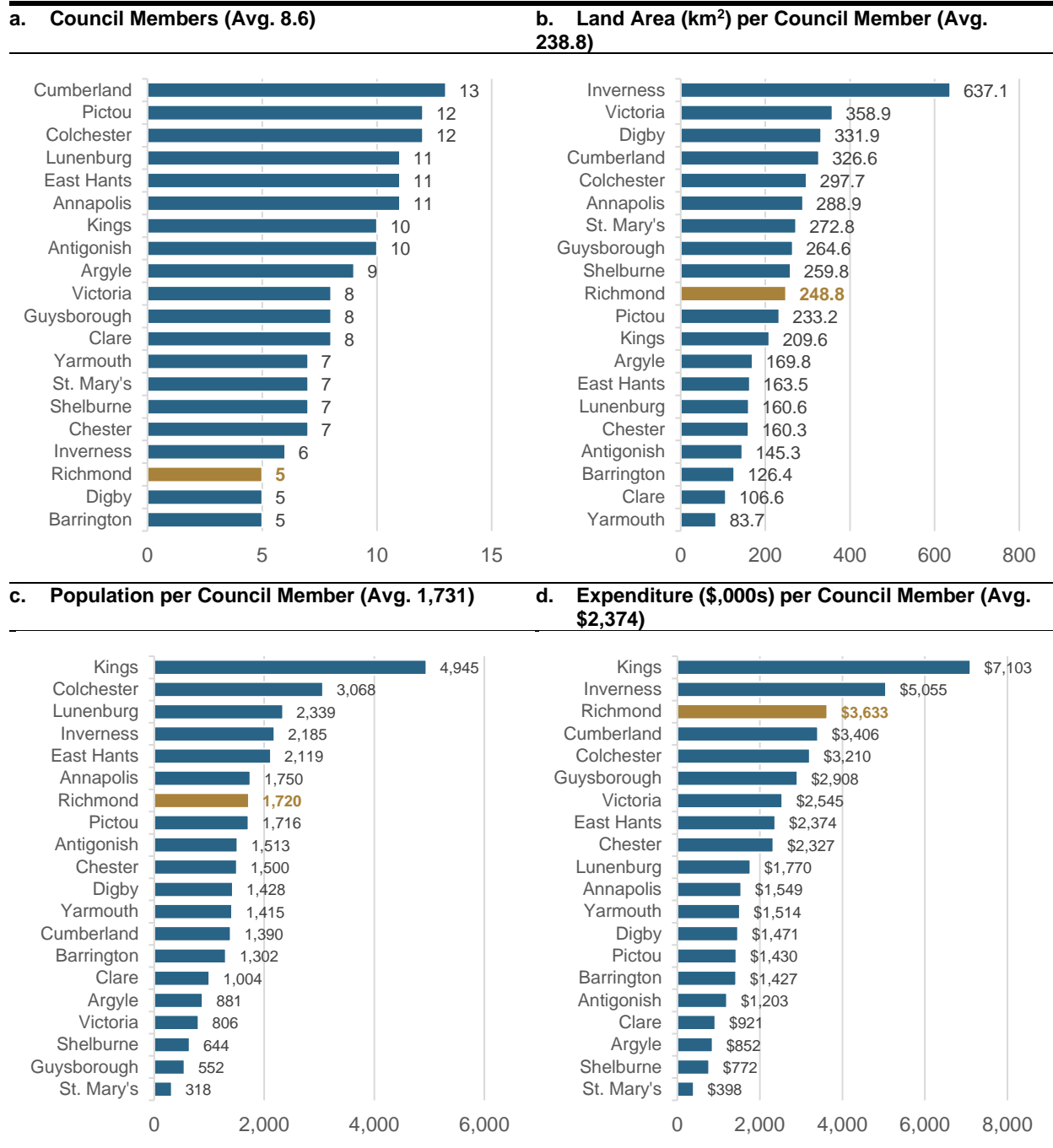
3.1.2 NOVA SCOTIA BENCHMARKING

As our brief discussion of the pros and cons of larger and smaller councils suggests, key parameters against which council sizes are typically judged are the ratios of constituents and land area to councillors, and the cost of council. While there are no accepted benchmarks against which a council can be judged to have too many or too few members, comparison to other similar municipalities at least gives a measure of where Richmond County stands.

Richmond currently has five councillors, which is tied with the districts of Barrington and Digby for the fewest council members among Nova Scotia's 20 rural municipalities and well below the average for the group (8.6 members). (**Figure 3-1a**). Richmond is also roughly in the middle in terms of the average area served by its councillors. Richmond's current five districts average 248.8 km² in area ranking tenth among the 20 or with just 4.2% more area than the 238.8 km² served by the average rural municipal councillor (**Figure 3-1b**). The most heavily emphasized measure is constituents per council member. Richmond with 1,720 residents per council member is close to the average of 1,731 for Nova Scotia rural municipalities and ranks seventh of 20 (**Figure 3-1c**)



Figure 3-1 Council Size and Measures of Council Size, Nova Scotia Rural Municipalities, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited



By the final measure shown, expenditure divided by council representatives, the County ranks toward the top. At \$3,632,851 per representative or 55.3% more than the average (\$2,339,283), Richmond Councillors rank third suggesting they are annually responsible more expenditures and more associated workload than their rural municipal counterparts elsewhere in the province (**Figure 3-1d**).

3.1.3 CURRENT AND FUTURE POPULATION

Like most rural municipalities in Nova Scotia, Richmond County has lost significant population over an extended period. As shown in **Figure 3-2**, the county's population fell from 9,440 in 2006 to 9,100 in 2021 (20.3%), based on population estimates from Statistics Canada. Nova Scotia, however, experienced a surge in growth from 2016 to 2021 that influenced Richmond. For the first time this century, within the context of the province's increase, Richmond's population grew, albeit modestly by 0.1%. In addition to generally declining, the county's population is aging.

Predictions to 2031 prepared by Stantec based on the age structure of the population and the recent positive population trend suggest the County's slight population growth is not likely to be sustained to 2031. Notwithstanding the gain achieved from 2016 to 2021, the County's age structure has continued to advance. Since 2006, the proportion of the population in typical child-bearing years between 18 and 44 years has fallen from 29.5% to 24.4% or from 2,931 to 2,219 people, leaving the county with 712 fewer residents likely to have children (-24.3%).

Even in the context of Richmond's slight population increase from 2016 to 2021, numbers in the county between 18 and 44 years decreased from 2,278 to 2,219 or 59 people. An even greater increase in new residents with a greater emphasis on family-forming in-migrants will be required to counter this continued decline. As it is, if in-migration can be sustained at the level experienced from 2016 to 2021, population decline will be slower than from 2006 to 2016 but will nevertheless occur. We expect the population in this scenario to decrease to 8,898 by 2031, at which time the next boundary review will be required.

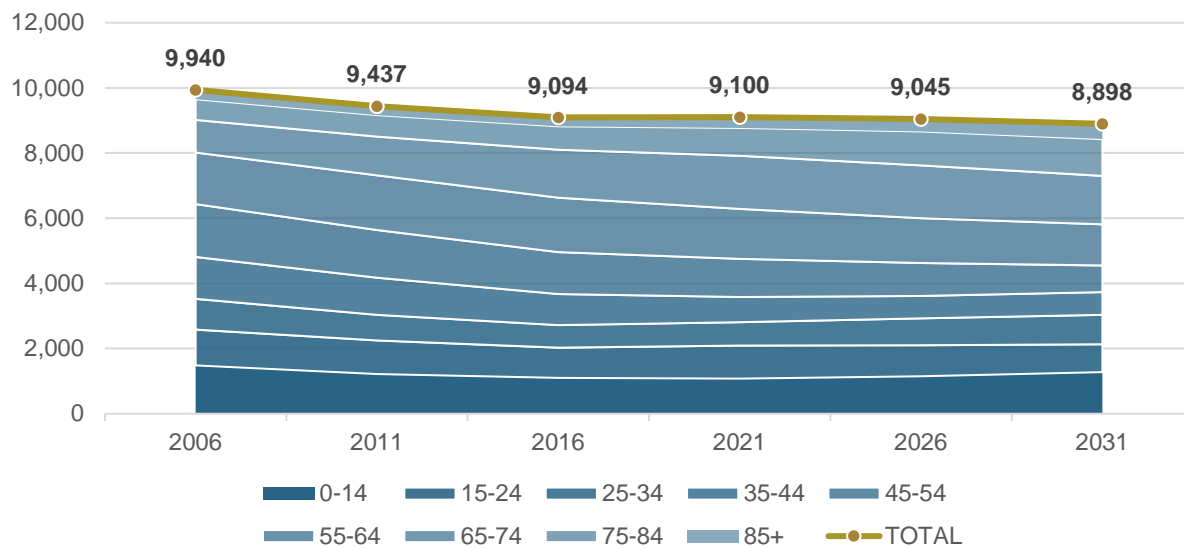
3.2 Council Consultation

Stantec completed interviews with three County Council members as well as the interim-Chief Administrative Officer between July 20 and July 26, 2022. Interviews were conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams or Zoom, or the telephone. Despite repeated efforts, two remaining Council members did not respond to Stantec's request for an interview. The opinions expressed by those interviewed were split between a preference for the current five-member council and increasing to a seven-member Council.

All the Council members interviewed were concerned with their workload, particularly the many committee roles expected of them. They noted that committee responsibilities had not been reduced after Council was cut to half its former membership. Councillors interviewed, who all serve part-time, said it was not possible to take on committee leadership roles while balancing general administrative duties. Despite the workload challenges, Councillors generally rated their experience highly and said the current Council is a strong, cohesive team with a passion for Richmond County.



Figure 3-2 Population by Age Group, County of Richmond, 2006-2031



Cohort	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
0-14	1,480	1,220	1,100	1,077	1,149	1,272
15-24	1,100	1,030	928	1,017	951	863
25-34	943	787	691	718	829	902
35-44	1,285	1,134	954	770	686	697
45-54	1,625	1,468	1,286	1,176	1,009	818
55-64	1,584	1,674	1,669	1,525	1,381	1,261
65-74	1,002	1,197	1,474	1,636	1,620	1,488
75-84	632	655	714	848	1,034	1,130
85+	289	272	278	333	387	467
TOTAL	9,940	9,437	9,094	9,100	9,045	8,898
<i>Change</i>	<i>-1.1%</i>	<i>-5.1%</i>	<i>-3.6%</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	<i>-0.6%</i>	<i>-1.6%</i>

Proportions of Total Population

0-17	18.9%	16.6%	15.3%	15.0%	15.4%	16.9%
18-44	29.5%	27.6%	25.1%	24.4%	24.5%	25.0%
45-64	32.3%	33.3%	32.5%	29.7%	26.4%	23.4%
65+	19.3%	22.5%	27.1%	31.0%	33.6%	34.7%

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited



All current Councillors are serving their first term, having won their districts in 2020 over incumbents. Although none of the three interviewees had run for municipal office previously, they all won by comfortable margins, with two obtaining 70 to 75% of the vote. They feel they have brought a fresh perspective. Overall, Councillors felt strongly about ensuring there is adequate representation for Richmond County residents.

Current Council members and the interim CAO were asked to rate the performance of the current Council on a scale from one, for poor, to five, for excellent. Responses ranged from two to four with an average response of three. When asked to explain their answers, the respondent who rated Council's performance at two stated that representatives in a small Council are too easily manipulated into conceding to interests that are not consistent with their respective district. The two respondents who chose a rating of three said that the structure of the Municipality created when it had a larger Council remains in place and the committee workload detracts from their administrative effectiveness. The most optimistic respondent, who gave a rating of four out of five, said the smaller Council size made for better decision-making despite the challenges of a large workload.

Branching from these inquiries, interviewees were asked if they had observed any changes in the atmosphere of Richmond Council during their current tenure or experience with previous Councils. Generally, interviewees thought that, despite the increased workload, downsizing Council had improved team cohesion and encouraged consensus building. A dissenter from this view, however, remarked that the atmosphere of Council is built more on individuals instead of the Council as a whole.

Several common themes emerged when respondents were prompted to identify the main strengths of Council. All interview subjects agreed that discussions are passionate and respectful, and that Councillors can disagree while remaining productive. They also asserted that Council is focused on the County's interests as a whole.

They identified several issues when they were asked about potential areas for improvement. As the foregoing summary has indicated, interviewees frequently mentioned the struggle to manage all expected duties, especially committee requirements. In addition, respondents addressed inconsistent levels of communication among Councillors and the lack of prior Council experience among current members. Finally, they unanimously agreed that Council size has no influence on municipal operations as it relates to the duties of staff or the ability to carry out general County business.

Respondents, who included three Council members and the CAO at the time, were split concerning the ideal council size. While two interviewees would like to continue with five members, the remaining pair expressed an interest in enlarging Council to 6 and 7 members, respectively. The respondent favouring seven was resolute that Council should have an odd number of members and indicated in their view five would be more acceptable than a council with an even number of members.

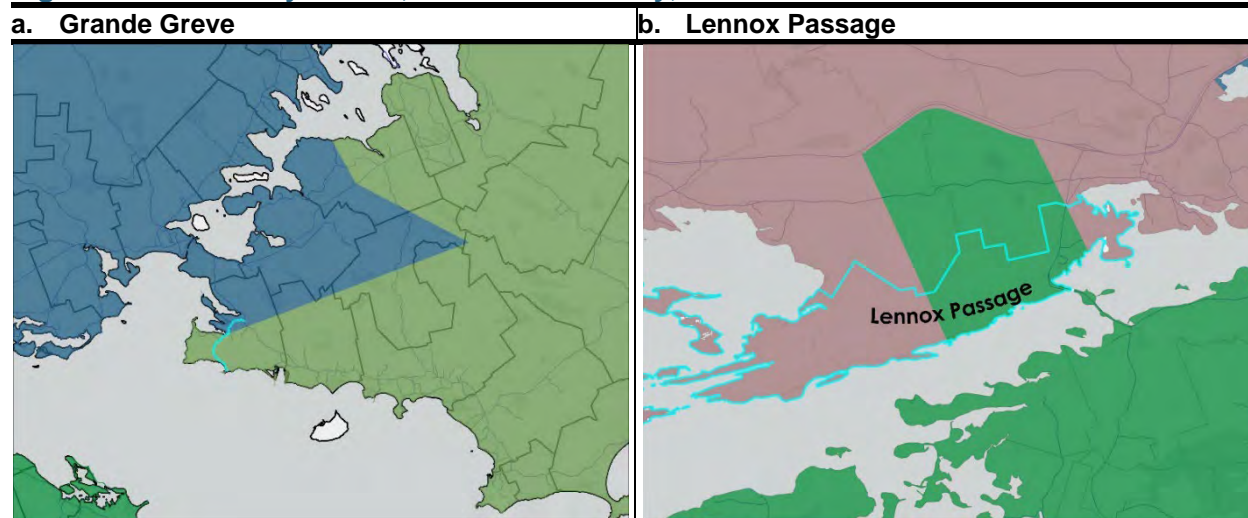
Of those who supported the maintenance of a five-member Council, one felt that a further reduction would result in impossible workload expectations and an increase would be a deterrent to the efficiency of Council's proceedings. The other supporter of the status quo identified efficiency as their main reason for



favouring five members rather than increasing the number. Alternatively, those who support an increase cited a more reasonable workload and potential benefits in community representation. One respondent also stated that the demanding workload of representatives on the current five-member council will deter residents from offering for Council, suggesting it was difficult to achieve reasonable work-life balance in a role that most expect to fill part-time.

Two main concerns with the boundaries of Richmond County's five current districts were identified in interviews. Council members noted a section of Grande Greve Road that is currently split between Districts 4 and 5 by a boundary that cuts across the roadway, which is confusing for residents (**Figure 3-3a**). One respondent also noted that the community of Lennox Passage is divided between Districts 2 and 3, with all electors located in District 2, which has prompted some vocal opposition among residents. The interviewee said Lennox Passage residents tend to identify with District 3, which is comprised of mainland communities like Lennox Passage. The balance of District 2, furthermore, is on Isle Madame, whose residents tend to see themselves as distinct from mainland residents (**Figure 3-3b**). This segmentation has reputedly prompted some residents to refuse participation in the latest municipal election.

Figure 3-3 Boundary Issues, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited



3.3 Community Consultation

Public consultation in the first phase of the study included a public meeting to obtain the views of the public concerning the appropriate size for Richmond County Council and an online survey exploring the same issues. The results of both initiatives were disappointing.

3.3.1 COUNCIL SIZE PUBLIC MEETING

Stantec with assistance from Richmond County staff scheduled a meeting at the United Church Hall in St. Peter's from 6:00 to 9:00 pm on August 9. The meeting was promoted on the County's website and through Facebook advertising posted to promote the Council Size Survey. Unfortunately, the only attendees at the session were two municipal staff members and two County Council members. Stantec's consultant went through the presentation with the municipal staff and Council members and responded to their questions and comments, particularly comments related to concerns with the boundary between Districts 4 and 5 where it crosses on Grande Greve Road and the concern with the combination in District 2 of Lennox Passage with areas on Isle Madame.

3.3.2 ONLINE COUNCIL SIZE SURVEY

Stantec also posted a Council Size Survey to obtain public opinions on County Council's size. The survey was conducted from July 25 to August 23. Over the period, 106 people responded. The response was disappointing but is the best guide we have to public views concerning council size in Richmond County. **Appendix A** to this report provides all survey questions with tables and charts summarizing the responses to each.

Respondents, as we normally find with council size surveys we conduct, are generally engaged with municipal politics. Most participate in municipal elections with more than half stating they voted in the last three elections in Richmond (55.8%) and another 29.8% voting in at least the most recent election in 2020. In all, 92.3% said they voted in at least one of the past three Richmond elections. Respondents also represented all five current electoral districts, although respondents from Districts 1, 3, and 4 were more heavily represented with 20.1%, 22.3%, and 25.2%, respectively, relative to Districts 2 (13.6%) and 5 (17.5%). Respondents were predominantly middle aged and seniors between 35 and 75 years of age (88.7%), with a moderate bias toward female respondents (55.0% v. 45.0% male).

Respondents to Question 3 gave lukewarm rating for the performance of their municipal council since 2016. The largest proportion (37.5%) gave Council a middling rating of 3. A larger proportion (40.3%), however, rated Council below 3, than gave it a higher rating (22.1%). Unfortunately, respondents who gave more negative ratings tended not to comment on their reasoning. Some who did comment, in fact, made positive remarks about the youth of council members and their openness, although a few made pointed remarks suggesting lack of trust or respect for councillors. Those who gave higher ratings complemented the diversity with women on council and a "fresh approach."



Most respondents consider council size relevant. Three-quarters (75.5%) responding to Question 5 stated that they believe the number of councillors influences performance. More than half (57.1%) who answered Question 6, furthermore, stated that their dealings with Council changed following the reduction of its membership from ten to the current five members. Responses to following Question 7 suggest varied views on this effect with the largest group (35.8%) indicating Council was worse, although a nearly equal proportion stated the influence was mixed (34.0%). Only 9.4% stated it had improved. Comments in response to Question 8 suggest that those who see improvement believe Council is more cohesive with fewer members; however, those who stated Council has worsened believe fewer perspectives are expressed and there is little variation in voting patterns.

The key survey question was Question 9, which asked directly how many representatives the respondent would like to have on Richmond County Council. Answers from 94 respondents strongly favoured either the current Council of five (21.9%) or an enlarged Council of seven (41.7%). The next closest alternatives were three (11.5%) and eight (10.4%) (**Figure 3-4**). The average response was 6.5 Council members. The majority preferring an increase in council size (64.9% preferring six or more Councillors) is unusual in our experience. In most surveys we have conducted, including our survey for Richmond County in 2014, respondents favoured reduced council membership.

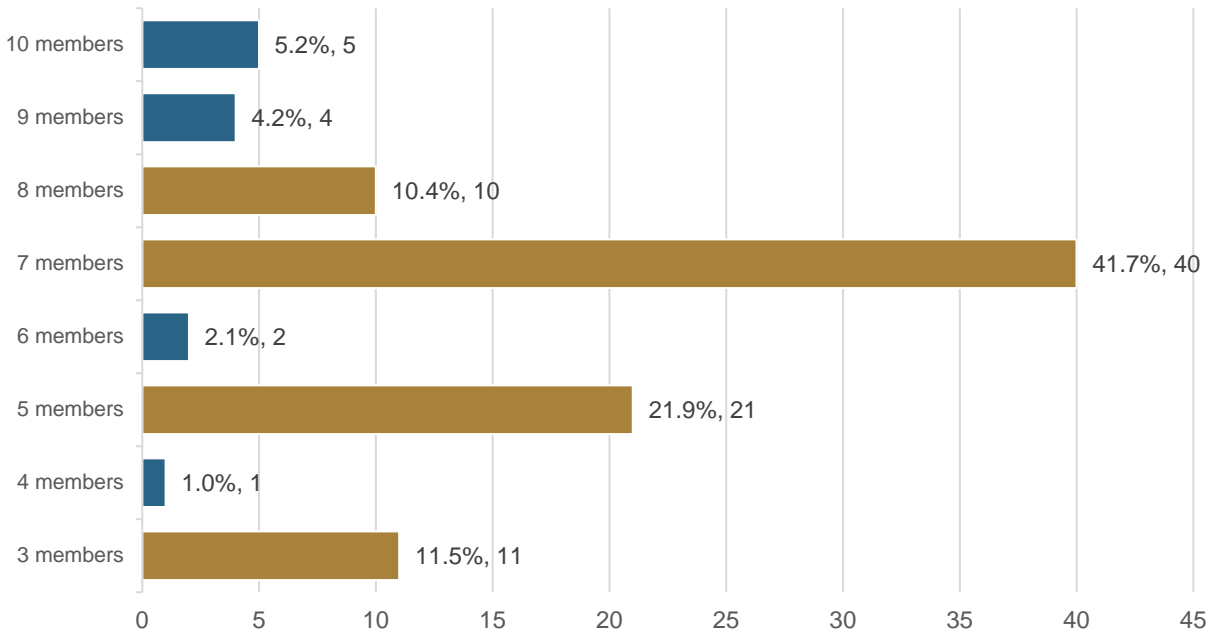
In response to Questions 10, 11, and 12 respectively asking why each respondent supported decreasing, maintaining, or enlarging Council, the smaller number of respondents preferring a Council with fewer than five members generally cited cost savings. Those preferring to keep Council at five, said County Council is doing a good job and that they would prefer that it not be any smaller. The group favouring an increase from five, suggested more perspectives would be valuable on Council. Some also expect better access to Councillors and others noted the area of the districts Councillors must currently serve.

Preference for a Council of seven was reasonably consistent across the County. It was favoured in four of the five current districts, with only District 4, which contains St. Peter's, favouring the current five members. In fact, five members was the third or fourth choice in Districts 1, 2, and 3 where larger numbers would like to see Council membership increased to more than seven (**Figure 3-5**).

The final two opinion questions in the survey asked if respondents had any concerns with the boundaries of their district (Question 13) or with other districts (Question 14). The most common concern was the division of Arichat between Districts 1 and 2, which was not only mentioned by several residents of the two districts in response to Question 13, but also by respondents from other districts. Respondents to both questions also criticized the above noted inclusion of Lennox Passage in District 2 with areas on Isle Madame and the boundary between Districts 4 and 5 on Grande Greve Road.

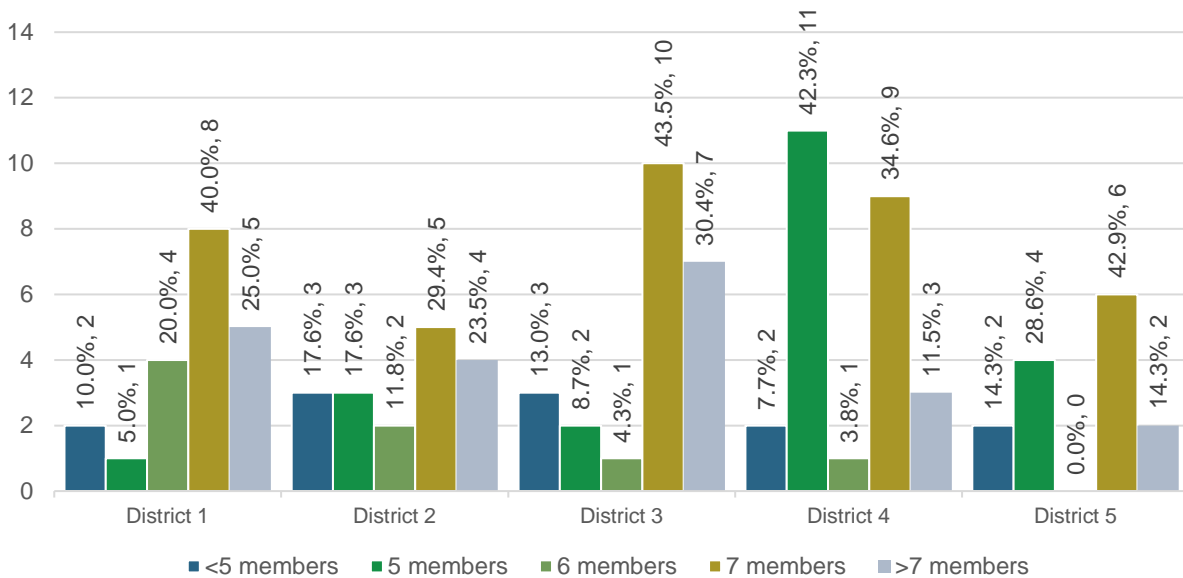


Figure 3-4 Council Size Preferences, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

Figure 3-5 Council Size Preferences by Electoral District, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited



4 BOUNDARY OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

Section 10 of the MGA establishes the key governance parameters for municipalities in the province. The section requires that a municipal council have at least three members and that only “[o]ne councillor shall be elected for each polling district in a county [like the Municipality of the County of Richmond] or district municipality and in a regional municipality.” In other words, councillors in Richmond County must be elected from defined geographic districts. Two councillors cannot be elected to represent a single district, nor can councillors be elected at large, both of which are permitted for Nova Scotia towns under the same section of the Act.

4.1 Boundary Criteria

Section 368 (4) of the Municipal Government Act sets criteria that the NSUARB must consider in establishing the boundaries of polling or electoral districts within municipalities:

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.

Following is a summary of Stantec’s interpretation of each criterion and the relative importance we have observed that the Board places on each. Our interpretation is based on our review of past Board decisions and our direct experiences before the Board.

4.1.1 NUMBER OF ELECTORS

The number of electors or eligible voters in individual districts is intertwined with following criteria, particularly voter parity. Certainly, the number of constituents needs to be sufficient to justify the creation of a district and should not be so large that it would be beyond the capacity of a councillor to deal with constituent concerns. The latter issue is however highly debatable given the wide disparity in the number of constituents served by councillors in Nova Scotia. Councillors in Kings County, for example, currently serve an average of 4,951 constituents and Halifax Regional Municipality councillors serve 28,746. Two Kings Councillors, in other words, serve more population than currently resides in Richmond, while one HRM Councillor serves three times the County’s entire population.

4.1.2 RELATIVE PARITY OF VOTING POWER

Past NSUARB decisions have typically emphasized “voter parity,” which is easily quantified and assessed. The standard is applied to reflect the basic democratic principle that representation should be in proportion to population, commonly referred to as “rep by pop.” The Board currently requires the number of voters in each polling district to be within $\pm 10\%$ of the average for all polling districts.



Since the early 1990s, the Board has gradually tightened this standard to the present level. At one time, it was only necessary for districts to be within $\pm 33\%$ of the average and, until the turn of the current century, $\pm 25\%$ was considered sufficient. The $\pm 10\%$ criterion has been applied in boundary reviews since 2006. Nearly all boundary applications to the NSUARB that we have reviewed contain a table documenting the number of electors in each district within the municipality in question with the variance of each from the average. The Board is usually sympathetic to small variations above or below its criterion but requires a written justification to consider any significant discrepancy, with a larger proposed variance being viewed as a greater burden on the municipal unit to justify.

4.1.3 POPULATION DENSITY

The NSUARB is also mindful of population density and geographic area of each polling district. In sparsely populated areas, the Board recognizes that it may be difficult to achieve relative voter parity (i.e., to keep the number of electors in each district within $\pm 10\%$ of the average of districts) without creating an extensive area in which disparate interests may be combined and which may be unreasonable for a councillor to serve. In many rural municipalities, for example, it is necessary to have at least one larger district to encompass lightly populated areas and the Board has tended to accept lower populations in such districts recognizing that meeting the parity standard would require coverage of an excessive land area.

4.1.4 COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

The second most cited reason, in our experience, for having districts that vary beyond the Board standard is community of interest, as it is usually desirable to represent communities of interest within a single district. Communities of interest may be racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, economic, or geographic groups. Districts do not, however, normally represent a specific community of interest. They usually contain several. It is nevertheless considered desirable to keep identifiable, geographically defined interests together in a single district and not divide them among two or more districts where their influence may be diluted or distorted. Larger communities that have significantly more electors than the average district may have to be divided to maintain voter parity. Smaller communities may also have to be divided to achieve parity or address other criteria, but it is a necessary trade-off rather than a desirable outcome.

4.1.5 GEOGRAPHIC SIZE

The main issue in considering the geographic size or land area of a district is ensuring a cohesive territory and a manageable area for the serving councillor. As noted, in relation to population density, above, the NSUARB has been willing to approve electoral districts that fall short of the $\pm 10\%$ voter parity standard where sparse populations require the excessive area to capture the necessary number of electors. The situation is common in many rural municipalities where population is concentrated on a coastline or along a highway corridor and only small numbers are found in residual inland or interior areas, a situation that in Richmond where population density on Isle Madame and adjacent coastal areas is higher than for inland areas, particularly lands to the northeast of St. Peter's.



4.1.6 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

We take several additional considerations into account in drawing boundaries that are not explicitly identified in the MGA. To begin, it is desirable to have readily identifiable boundaries and avoid significant geographic barriers within districts. Distinct boundaries can be difficult to find. Roads, particularly limited access highways, often make excellent boundaries because they tend to be well known and visible. Lower order roads, particularly in undeveloped areas, can also be useful, as are rivers, lakes, inlets, which often separate communities, especially where there are no crossing links (e.g., bridges across water features, which are equivalent to interchanges on highways). Where dividing physical features are lacking, it is usually effective to draw boundaries in areas where population is sparse, and separation of communities can be avoided. In such situations, boundaries defined by topographic features such as ridges or, in the absence of such landmarks, by straight lines, serve well.

Electoral districts are also generally contiguous; that is, their territory is continuous and uninterrupted. District 2 in the District of Guysborough is the only exception we are familiar with in Nova Scotia. Its configuration is justified by the objective of ensuring representation for the separated African-Nova Scotian communities in Lincolnville, Sunnyville, and Upper Big Tracadie. We are not aware of another similar example among rural or regional municipalities in the province and consider contiguity to be an absolute objective for typical electoral districts.

Finally, although it is also not directly expressed in the legislation, we consider it beneficial for electoral districts to be internally connected. Roadways and equivalent transportation connections that join communities directly within a district (i.e., without departing to another district) are desirable because they promote communities of interest and facilitate the work of councillors who must travel among constituents in their district. They are also likely to be more convenient for electors when they travel to the polling station within their district on election days.

4.2 Proposed Boundary Scenarios

For discussion with Council at the close of Phase 1, Stantec developed scenarios for 3, 5, 7 and 8 districts. The four sizes received the most support in responses to Question 9 of the Council Size Survey, recognizing that 5 and 7, which were also referenced by the Council members we interviewed, received substantially more support than either 3 or 8 (see **Figure 3-4**, above).

Stantec used ArcGIS Pro's Build Balanced Zones tool to create the potential boundary configurations. The districts were comprised of communities defined by the Province for the Nova Scotia Civic Address File (NSCAF) without dividing any of those communities and were designed to satisfy NSUARB criteria, particularly the requirement that the number of electors in each district should be within $\pm 10\%$ of the average of all districts.

We rated the scenarios against the criteria identified in Section 368 (4) of the MGA and summarized in **Section 4.1** above, as well as in consideration of responses to Question 9 of the online survey to develop the comparative ratings presented in **Table 4-1**.



Scenario	Number of Electors	Voter Parity	Population Density	Community of Interest	Geographic Size	Survey Support	Total Rating	Overall Ranking
3 districts	1	2	1	1	4	3	12	Third
5 districts	1	1	1	4	1	2	10	Second
7 districts	1	3	1	2	1	1	9	First
8 districts	1	4	1	4	1	4	15	Fourth

Our assessment of the criteria was generally qualitative. The meaning of the number of electors is not well defined. The number is constant for all scenarios and consequently we have rated all the scenarios considered with a one. Three of the four scenarios met the $\pm 10\%$ voter parity criterion for all districts. The 8-district scenario did not for one district and was therefore rated fourth. The remaining three have differing degrees of variation and we chose to rank them based on the district with the largest variation from the average (-6.1% for three districts, -4.2% for five districts, and -8.1 for seven districts). Population density, like number of voters is poorly defined and is constant for all scenarios.

Community of interest, on the other hand, is better accommodated in some scenarios than others. As noted, areas of Isle Madame and the Mainland must be combined for the 5- and 8-district arrangements, and they were, therefore, both ranked fourth. The 5-district scenario, for its part, required Arichat to be split and is, therefore, ranked second after the 3-district scenario, which does not divide any communities and separates the county in distinct areas. Finally, we assessed geographic size in terms of the largest district created in each scenario. The variation is generally modest, and we have rated the 5-, 7-, and 8-district the same with a rank of 1. The largest district in the 3-district arrangement is not enormously larger than the largest district in the other three scenarios; however, the overall size of the districts is significantly bigger, which in our opinion justifies a fourth-place ranking.

The survey results are straightforward. Seven districts was the expressed preference of the largest group of respondents to Question 9 (41.9%). It was followed by five, three, and, then, eight with 21.9%, 11.5%, and 10.4%, respectively. The overall ranking based on the lowest total of all ranks placed the 5- and 7-district scenarios first with ranks totaling 8. Three districts followed with 9 and eight districts trailed with 11.

Based on the rankings, we recommended focusing further consideration in Phase 2 of the study on five and seven districts. The 5-district arrangement modified the current district boundaries primarily to meet the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion. The parity standard was also the leading consideration in developing the seven-district framework.



4.2.1 CURRENT DISTRICTS

Figure 4-1 illustrates the current district arrangement. The average area of each district is 262 square kilometres and the average number of electors is 1,516 per district.⁴ Three districts (2, 3, and 4) are outside the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion. District 1 is also close at -9.5% . District 2 has the largest variance from the average at 13.4% short of the average.

4.2.2 FIVE-DISTRICT SCENARIO

The current five-member Council was supported by some sitting Council members as well as 21.9% of respondents to the online Council Size Survey who ranked it as the second most popular choice after a seven-member Council.

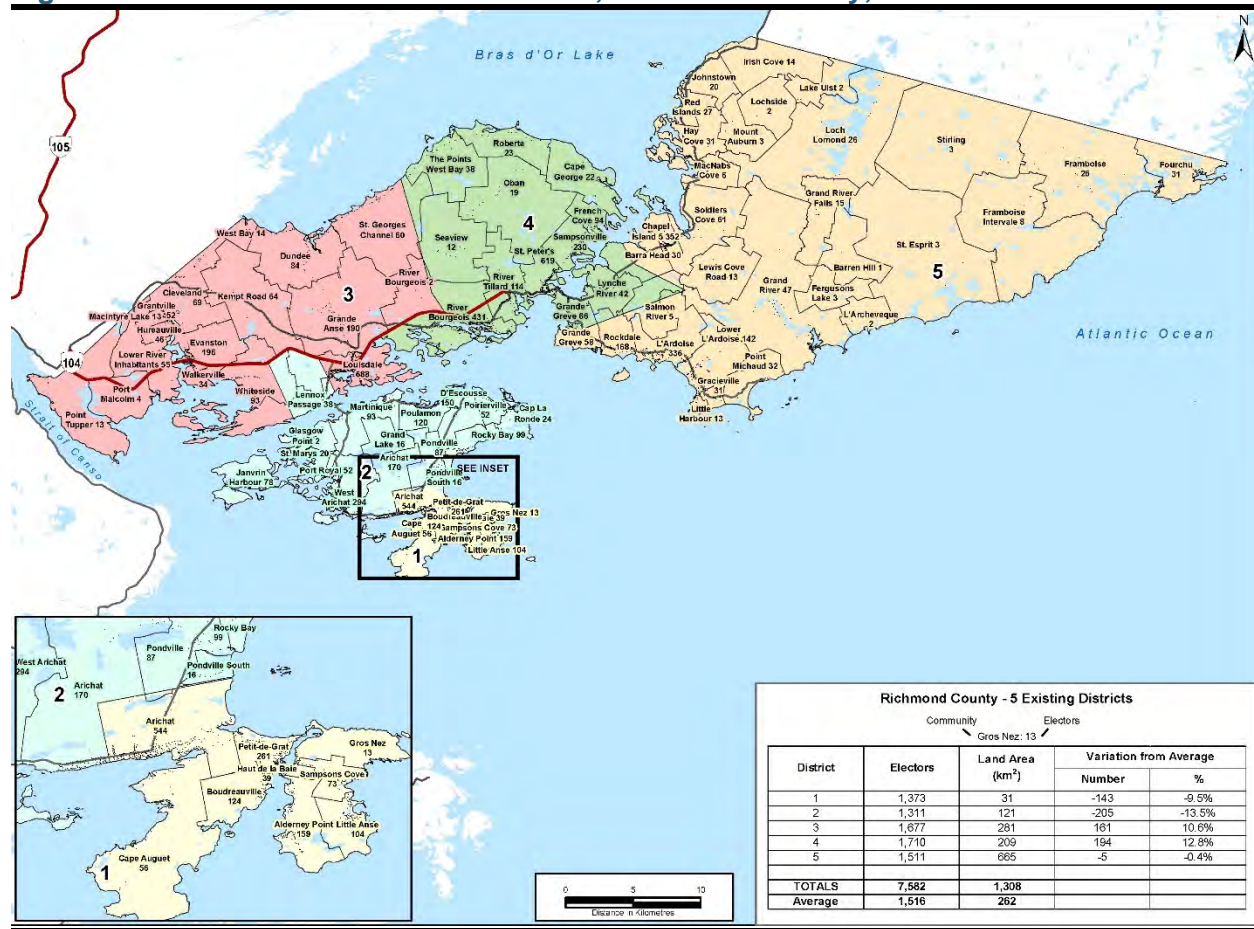
The average district size is 261 square kilometres, as it is with the current five-district arrangement. Proposed District 5 covering the area of the county east of St. Peter's has the largest area (**Figure 4-1**). At 673 square kilometres, the District is nearly twice the size of proposed District 3, which has an area of 355 square kilometres. It is slightly larger than current District 5, which also takes in the eastern area of the county and covers 664 square kilometres or just 1.4% less land area.

The five-district arrangement was readily balanced. All five districts are within $\pm 5\%$ of the average number of electors per district (1,516). The largest variation from the average is for proposed District 3, which is just 4.2% short of the average.

⁴ Neither figure is comparable to the numbers used to benchmark Richmond relative to other rural municipalities in Nova Scotia in **Figure 3-1**, above. In order to have comparable figures across all the municipalities, we use total population from the Census of Canada for benchmarking rather than numbers of electors, which are not readily available for all municipalities. Similar, land area for benchmarking comes from the Census of Canada, whereas the area used for comparing districts in this chapter was calculated by Stantec using GIS.



Figure 4-1 Current Five Electoral Districts, Richmond County, 2022



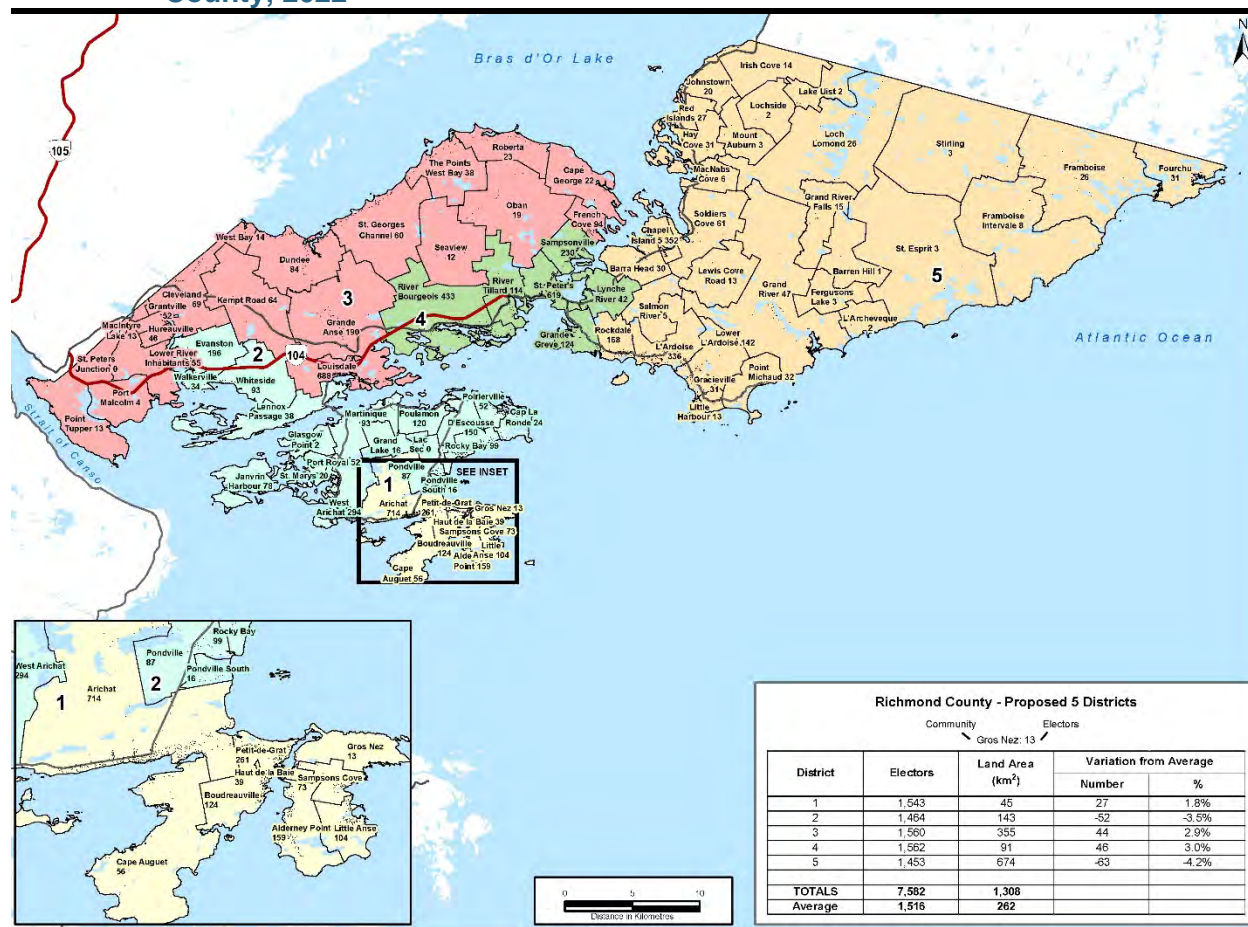
Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

While it is possible in the five-district scenario to combine all of Arichat with Petit-de-Grat in District 1, it is not feasible to create a district from the balance of Isle Madame meeting the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion. To have an adequate number of electors, District 2 must incorporate Lennox Passage, Whiteside, Evanston, and Walkerville, exacerbating a complaint concerning the combination of island and mainland areas that we heard through consultation with Council members and survey responses. The balance of the districts, on the other hand, work well with road connections facilitating movement within each district.

The proposed scenario eliminated the boundary issue with Grande Greve Road by simply including all the Grande Greve community in proposed District 4. Respecting Grande Greve as a single community of interest resolved the issue in all scenarios created by Stantec.



Figure 4-2 Proposed Five Electoral Districts, Boundaries Options Survey, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

4.2.3 SEVEN-DISTRICT SCENARIO

The seven-district option was by far the most strongly supported Council size alternative in the Council Size Survey results. It was cited as the preferred council size of some current Councillors interviewed by Stantec and was the most popular choice in the online Boundary Options Survey with the support of 41.7% respondents to Question 9.

The average area with seven districts is 187 square kilometres. District 7 is the largest proposed district with an area of 656 square kilometres, only slightly smaller than proposed District 5 in the five-district scenario and 1.2% smaller than current District 5, which we have noted is the largest district in the current arrangement (**Figure 4-3**). It is nearly three times larger than the next biggest district, District 4 on the shore of Bras d'Or Lake.



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The balance in the number of electors per district is not quite as good as for five districts, but all proposed districts fit comfortably within the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion. Proposed District 2 has the largest variance at 8.1% short of the average.

In the scenario developed, Isle Madame was divided into two districts with District 1 containing Petit-de-Grat and the larger eastern portion of Arichat and District 2 incorporating the balance of the Island without any mainland communities. Areas to west of St. Peter's were divided into three districts. Proposed District 3 incorporates Lennox Passage and areas west to the County boundary. Proposed District 4 is comprised of areas to the east and north along the southwest shore of Bras d'Or Lake, while proposed District 5 encompasses Louisdale and related communities to the south of proposed District 4. Proposed District 7 extends east of St. Peters to the eastern County boundary with only small changes from proposed District 5 in the five-district scenario.

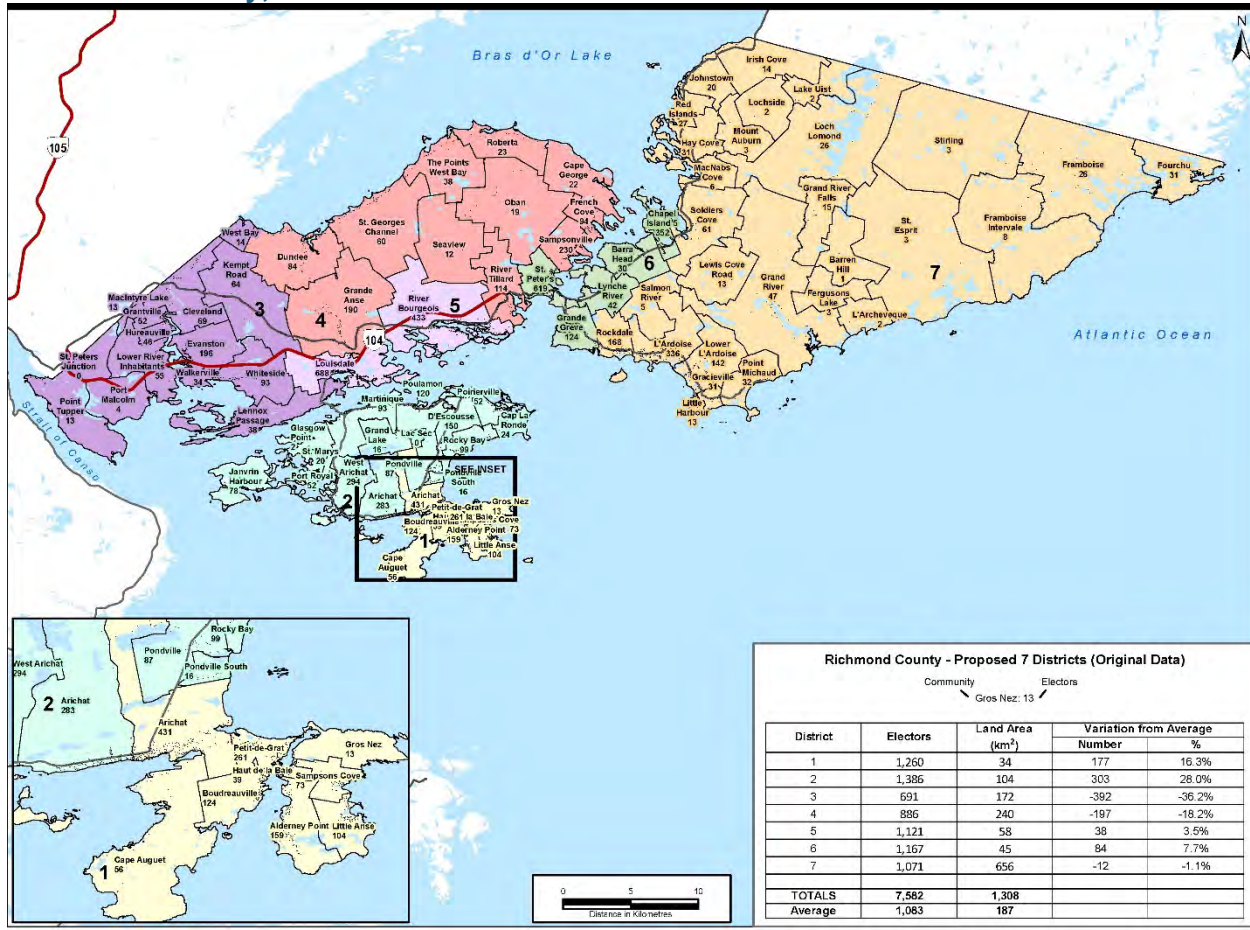
As originally calculated the distribution of electors was appealing. Elector numbers for all districts were comfortably within the parity criterion, with the largest variation being -8.1% for proposed District 2:

District	Electors	Land Area (km2)	Number	%
1	1,112	34	29	2.7%
2	995	104	-88	-8.1%
3	1,083	172	0	0.0%
4	1,071	240	-1.2	-1.1%
5	1,167	58	84	7.7%
6	1,121	45	38	3.5%
7	1,033	656	-50	-4.6%
TOTAL	7,582	1,309		
Average	1,083	187		

Unfortunately, although the above numbers were presented to the public, Stantec's calculations of elector numbers were faulty. Following review and correction of the numbers, we determined variations for Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4 were unacceptably large, ranging from 16.3% for District 1 to -36.2% for District 3. **Figure 4-3** illustrates the district arrangement developed with the correct elector numbers.



Figure 4-3 Proposed Seven Electoral Districts, Boundaries Options Survey, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

4.3 Boundaries Consultation

To assess public response to the boundary proposals, Stantec conducted public meetings in St. Peter's and Arichat, and posted an online survey that was available to all residents for over a month.

4.3.1 BOUNDARIES PUBLIC MEETINGS

Two evening public meetings were held to provide an opportunity for the public to review boundary options, discuss them with the consultant, and provide comments. As with the one meeting held for the Phase 1 review of Council Size, attendance was poor. The first meeting in St. Peter's on Wednesday, October 19, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm attracted only one community member, and the second in Arichat the following evening drew a community member and a Councillor.



Stantec's Project Manager discussed boundary issues and made a presentation on the project in both cases. The dialogue was limited, but the participants did discuss the past decision that reduced Richmond County Council to five members and the choice between five and seven Council members. No issues were raised concerning boundaries in either scenario, although the participant in St. Peter's offered the opinion that there could be benefits from combining areas on the mainland with Isle Madame in District 2 in the five-district option by bringing the perspectives of the two areas together.

4.3.2 ONLINE BOUNDARIES OPTIONS SURVEY

The Boundaries Options Survey was posted online on October 24, 2022. Some difficulties with Facebook verification delayed the complementary posting of Facebook advertising until November 4. Only eleven individuals responded to the survey before November 4. After the ads were running, response improved considerably, ultimately reaching 133 total responses by November 27 when Stantec closed the survey.

Appendix B provides a complete summary of survey results.

Survey respondents were mostly between 35 and 74 years of age (90.9%). Only 3.8% were under 35 and just 4.5% were 75 or older. A slight majority were male (50.8% v. 49.2% female). Most indicated they voted in the 2020 municipal election (90.7%) with more than 60% indicating they voted in the 2012, 2016, and 2020 municipal elections. Representation across the County's five districts was reasonably balanced. District 5 had the lowest share of responses (17.1%), although District 4 was almost the same (17.4%). Districts 1 and 3 had the largest shares (23.3% in both cases).

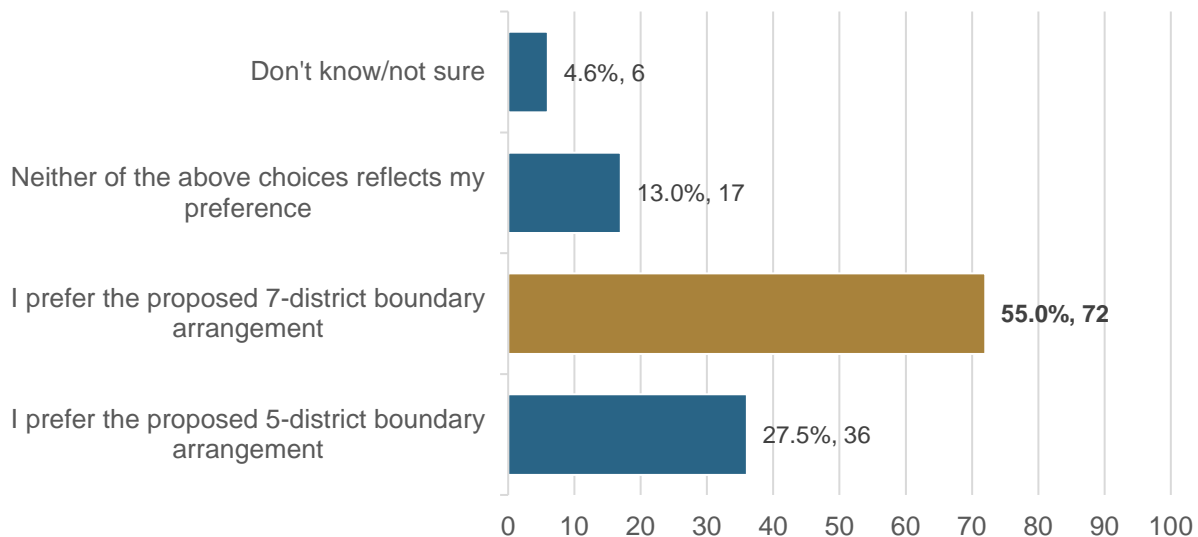
Questions 3 and 4 asked respondents to review maps of the 5 and 7-district boundary scenarios and included links to larger maps for more detailed inspection. Of 133 respondents, 94 (70.7%) responded to Question 3. Of the 94 commenters, 39 (29.3%) simply indicated they did not have any concerns with the boundaries presented and another 10 (10.6%) said "Yes" they had concerns but did not specify what their concerns were. The 55 (58.5%) who gave detailed answers referred to Council size issues more often than specific boundary concerns. Of those who did address boundary concerns, many suggested the areas of Districts 3 and 4 were excessive. Several also decried the need to combine the northern portion of Isle Madame with areas on the mainland. Some also indicated that it would be desirable to incorporate Cape George, French Cove, and Sampsonville with St. Peters.

Eighty-eight respondents answered Question 4 with 45 (33.8%) stating they had no concerns with the 7-district boundary arrangement and six saying they had concerns without specifying what those concerns were (6.8%). Responses from 51 (58.0%) who detailed their answers once again emphasized Council size issues over detailed boundary considerations. Some expressed a preference for the 7-district arrangement because the districts will be smaller and a few suggested it was simply a better arrangement than the five-district option, presumably because they felt it better reflects the fabric of communities in the County, particularly because districts portrayed for Isle Madame did not include mainland areas. On the other hand, some, again, noted the desirability of combining Cape George, French Cove, and Sampsonville with St. Peters.



Following Question 5 posed the critical question of the boundaries phase of the project: which boundary option did respondents prefer? Answers from 131 respondents (98.5% of 133 who completed the survey) strongly favoured the 7-district scenario, which was supported by 55.0%. Just over a quarter (27.5%) preferred five districts with 13.0% indicating they did not like either option, and 4.6% saying they were not sure of their preference (Figure 4-4).

Figure 4-4 Council Boundary Option Preferences, Richmond County, 2022



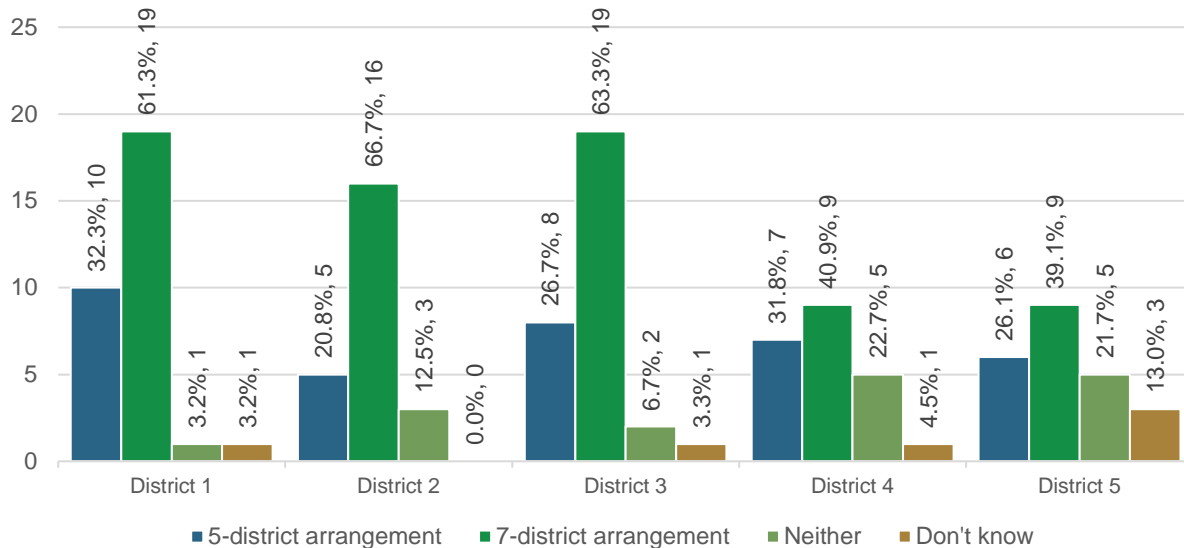
Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

Comments in response to Question 6, asking respondents to explain why they made their choice, again emphasized size considerations over boundary details. Supporters of five districts among 105 respondents to the question said it would result in a more efficient, cost-effective Council. The majority who preferred seven cited benefits in better representation and boundaries that better reflected community affiliations.

The distribution of preferences was balanced across the County. The 7-district arrangement was favoured in all five current districts. The preference for seven was the most pronounced in Districts 1, 2, and 3, but it was also the favoured choice in Districts 4 and 5 (Figure 4-5). In the case of District 4, responses indicated a shift from the Council Size Survey in which the largest number of respondents in District 4 preferred keeping Council at five members. Comments from respondents in District 4 who chose seven districts over five suggested similar motives to supporters of seven elsewhere in the County with references to local representation and the ability of more Councillors to address community concerns.



Figure 4-5 Council Size Preferences by District, Richmond County by District, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

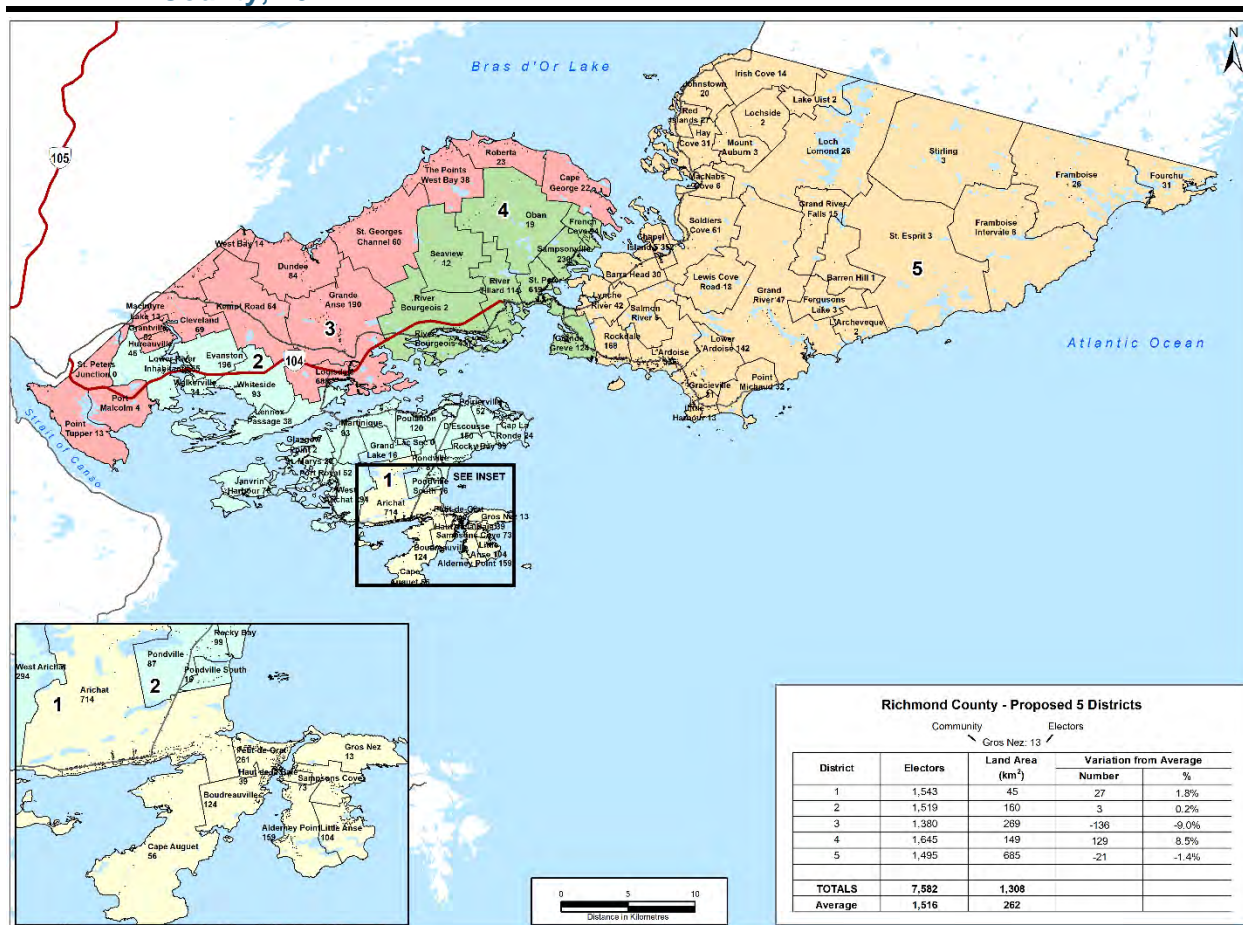
4.3.3 BOUNDARY REVISION

On completion of the online Boundary Options Survey, Stantec determined that the counts of electors by district in the seven-district scenario presented in the survey were incorrect as discussed in **subsection 4.2.3**, above. Specifically, we realized Isle Madame has more electors than can be accommodated in two districts. With seven districts, after creating two complete districts on Isle Madame, its residual population must be combined with areas on the mainland to meet the parity criterion like the five-district scenario. In the case of the seven-district arrangement, mainland communities will form the majority in the third district required, whereas proposed District 2 in the 5-district scenario is predominantly comprised of Isle Madame communities, with a relatively moderate contribution from the mainland. In addition, the survey provided comments on some boundary details and drew some additional comments from Council members, most notably the desirability of including some or all of Cape George, French Cove, and Sampsonville in the same district as St. Peters.

After determining a new survey would be required, Stantec's Project Manager met with Council members and leading County staff on December 14, 2022, to review the proposed boundaries presented for both five and seven districts. The workshop meeting resulted in two new district arrangements that participants agreed better reflected communities of interest in Richmond County while reasonably satisfying the NSUARB parity criterion (**Figure 4-6** and **Figure 4-7**). Neither scenario is, however, perfect given the need to balance community interest with voter parity.



Figure 4-6 Proposed Five Electoral Districts, Boundaries Decision Survey, Richmond County, 2022



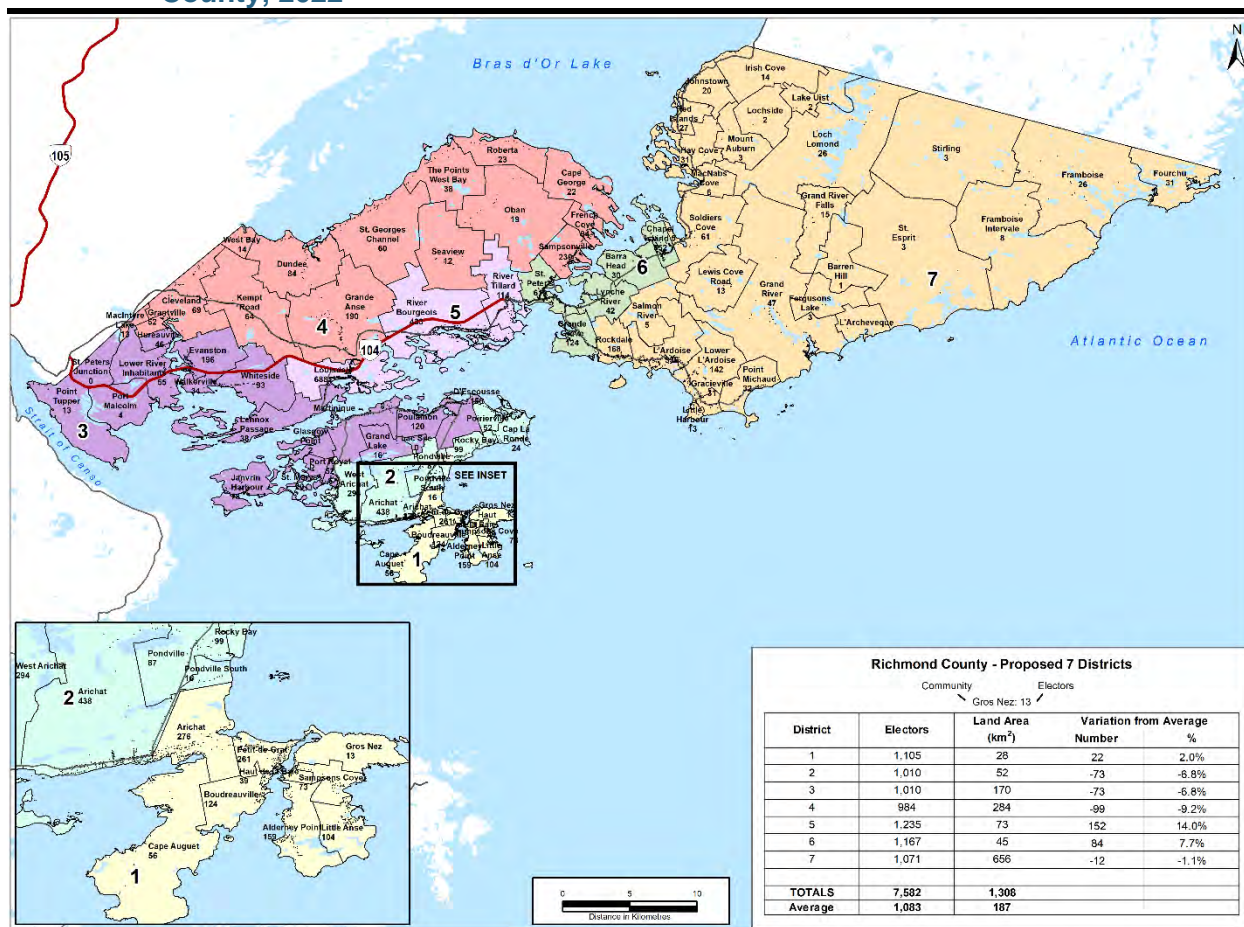
Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

Although elector numbers were calculated correctly for the five-district option and met the parity criterion, workshop participants reviewed the arrangement presented in the Boundary Options Survey in consideration of comments from survey respondents and their own knowledge of the inter-relationships among Richmond communities. Changes to the five-district scenario included the following:

- Lower River Inhabitants (55 electors) was shifted from proposed District 2 to proposed District 3
- The communities of French Cove (94), Oban (19), and Seaview (12) were transferred from proposed District 3 to proposed District 4
- Lynche River (42) transferred from proposed District 5 to proposed District 4.



Figure 4-7 Proposed Seven Electoral Districts, Boundaries Decision Survey, Richmond County, 2022



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

District 1 was not changed. The key benefit of the adjustments was to bring French Cove into District 4 with St. Peters and Sampsonville. Councillors felt that Oban and Seaview were not well connected to proposed District 3 and made more sense as components of proposed District 3. Cape George, which is directly connected to other communities in District 3 via West Bay Highway, was left in that district to keep its number of electors within the parity standard. All districts, consequently, satisfy the ±10% parity criterion, although the degree of variance increased (proposed District 3 is -9.0% and proposed District 4 is +8.5%).

More substantial changes were made to the seven-district scenario to correct errors as well as account for public input through the preceding survey, while respecting parity to the degree possible:

- Arichat to the west of Route 320/Fleur-de-lis Trail (438 electors) from proposed District 2 to proposed District 1



- Janvrin Harbour (78), St. Mary's (20), Glasgow Point (2), Port Royal (52), Martinique (93), Grand Lake (16), Lac Sec (0), Poulamon (120), d'Escousse (150) from proposed District 2 to proposed District 3
- MacIntyre Lake (13), Grantville (52), Cleveland (69), West Bay (14), Kempt Road (64) from proposed District 4 to proposed District 3
- River Tillard (114) from proposed District 4 to proposed District 5.

To balance the distribution of electors, major changes had to be made to the western districts. Arichat had to be split to balance proposed Districts 1 and 2, and surplus electors in nine recognized but generally small communities in the northwest portion of Isle Madame had to be incorporated in proposed District 3, which is largely on the mainland. A substantial change was also necessary to shift numbers from the northwest sector of proposed District 3 to proposed District 4. Proposed District 4, therefore, gained five communities from District 3. River Tillard was also moved from proposed District 4 to proposed District 5 because it is much better connected to either proposed District 5 or proposed District 6 than it is to proposed District 4. Proposed Districts 6 and 7 were not changed relative to the proposals presented in the Boundary Options Survey.

With River Tillard added, District 5 exceeds the parity criterion at 14.0% above the average, but Stantec and Richmond representatives felt its inclusion in District 5 is more logical than incorporating it in District 4 simply to maintain a number within $\pm 10\%$ of the average. Remaining proposed districts, in any case, satisfied the parity standard.

4.3.4 BOUNDARY DECISION SURVEY

The third survey to present the revised five- and seven-district boundary proposals was similar to the two preceding surveys. It contained nine questions. Initial questions asked which current electoral district does the respondent live in and their participation in recent elections. As with the Boundary Options Survey, the core question asked respondents to examine the boundary scenarios presented and choose the one they preferred. Mapping was incorporated in the survey questionnaire with a link to view enlarged maps for those who wished to assess the details of boundaries and community combinations. A follow-up question asked each respondent to indicate the reasons for their choice and related questions provided opportunities to indicate any concerns respondents might have with the boundaries proposed in either scenario. Additional questions obtained information on the gender and age of respondents.

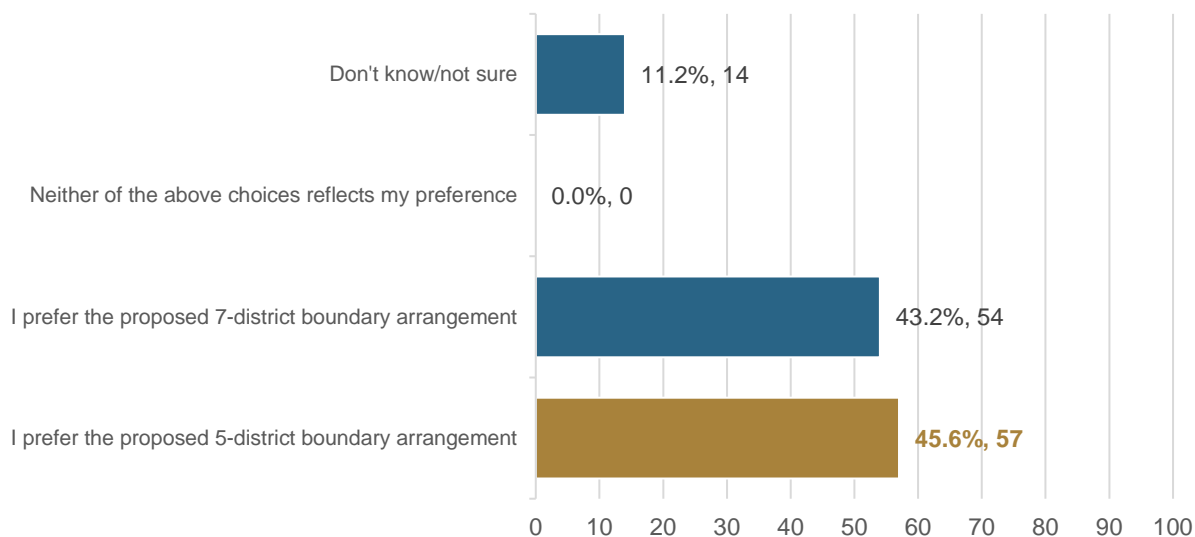
The survey was initiated on December 20, 2022, and closed at midnight on January 15, 2023. As with the previous surveys, the Boundaries Decision Survey was supported by postings on the County of Richmond website and Facebook page, as well as by Facebook advertising. Over the period the survey was open, 135 people responded. **Appendix C** provides a summary of responses to each question.



As with the earlier surveys, respondents were typically participants in municipal electoral processes. Most respondents (66.2%) stated they voted in all three of Richmond’s most recent Council elections and 88.7% said they had voted on at least one of the three occasions. Responses were evenly split between males and females (50.4% and 49.6%, respectively) but skewed to middle aged and older residents with 54.8% between 45 and 64 years of age, and 85.9% between 35 and 75.

In contrast to the preceding two surveys, respondents favoured five districts over seven in response to Question 5 of the survey, albeit by a narrow margin (57 to 54 or 45.8% v. 43.2%) (**Figure 4-8**). By district, views were divided. Residents of current Districts 1, 2, and 4 favoured the five-district arrangement, while residents of current District 3 preferred seven districts and residents of current District 5 were evenly divided between the five and seven (**Figure 4-9**).

Figure 4-8 Council Boundary Decision Preferences, Richmond County, 2023



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

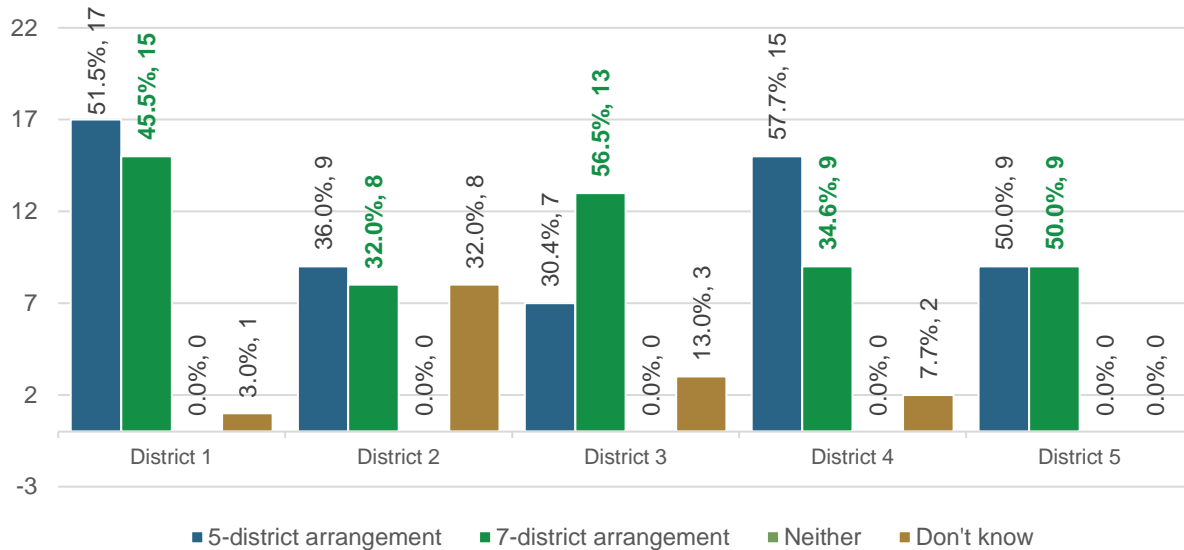
Follow-up Question 6 asking why respondents chose one option or the other indicated boundary preferences were largely dictated by the Council size the respondent favoured, which, of course, translates to the number of districts. Respondents who chose the five-district option typically stated that they preferred a five-person Council (46 of 57 or 80.7%) and those who chose the seven-district option said they preferred seven Council members (50 of 54 or 92.6%) (**Figure 4-10**).

Among other reasons offered for choosing the five or seven-district arrangements, the most often selected after preference for the associated Council size was “[t]he boundaries better respect communities within Richmond County.” There was however moderate difference between respondents who preferred the five-district arrangement (15 of 57 or 26.3%) and those who chose the seven-district option (17 of 54 or 31.5%). Significantly more who favoured seven believed the arrangement they chose grouped communities more effectively (12 of 54 or 22.2%) than respondents who favoured five districts (6



of 57 or 10.6%); however, more who chose five districts suggested their own district was better configured in that arrangement (9 of 57 or 15.8%) than those who selected seven districts (2 of 54 or 3.7%) (Figure 4-10).

Figure 4-9 Council Boundary Decision Preferences by District, Richmond County, 2023

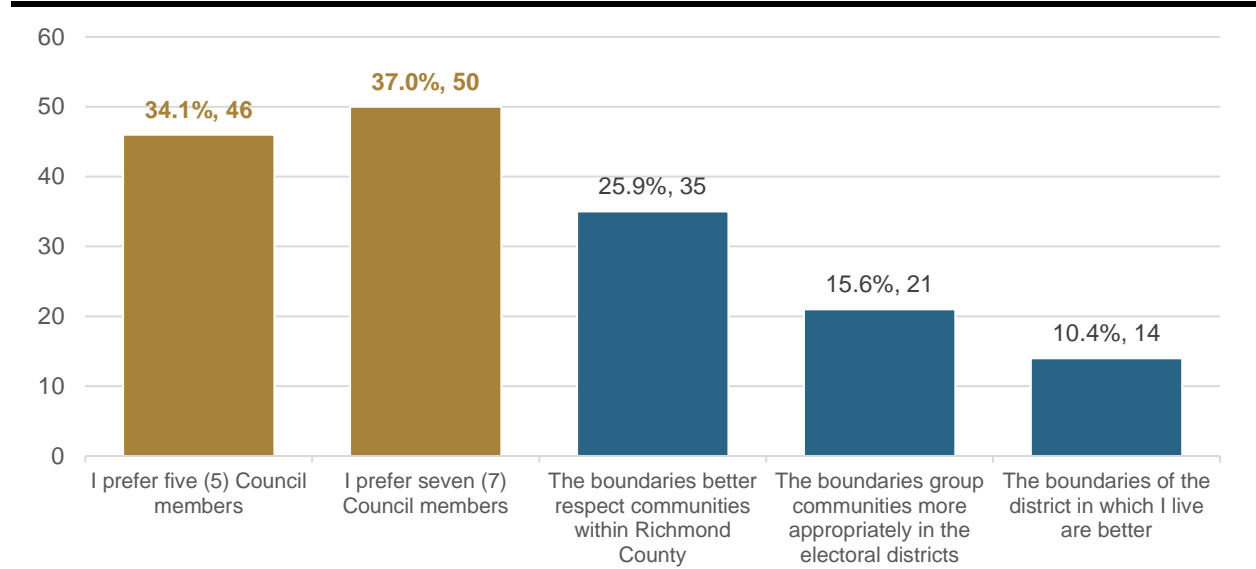


Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

It is interesting and relevant to note that the majority of respondents to the preceding Boundary Options Survey in each of current Districts 1, 2, and 4 preferred the seven-district scenario (Figure 4-5, above). At that point, the seven-district arrangement presented two districts confined to Isle Madame. The adjustment of boundaries that required the incorporation of the northwest portion of the island with adjacent areas on the mainland to meet the parity criterion appears to have swung the preference of many respondents from seven districts to five. Comments in response to Questions 3 and 4 soliciting concerns with the five- and seven-district scenarios, included frequent references to the combination of areas on the mainland and on Isle Madame in both scenarios. Respondents in District 3 continued to favour seven districts but shifted from 63.3% preferring it to 56.5%. District 5 saw a similar small shift from 39.1% preferring the seven-district arrangement, 26.1% favouring five, and 21.7% indicating they liked neither option to a 50.0%/50% tie between the two choices.



Figure 4-10 Reasons for Council Boundary Decision Preferences, Richmond County, 2023



Boundary Option Preference	I prefer five (5) Council members	I prefer seven (7) Council members	The boundaries better respect communities within Richmond County	The boundaries group communities more appropriately in the electoral districts	The boundaries of the district in which I live are better
5-district boundary arrangement	41	1	15	6	9
7-district boundary arrangement	0	44	17	12	2
Don't know/not sure	1	4	1	3	3
TOTAL	42	49	33	21	14
<i>% of Total</i>	<i>31.1%</i>	<i>36.3%</i>	<i>24.4%</i>	<i>15.6%</i>	<i>10.4%</i>

Source: Stantec Consulting Limited



4.4 Summary and Recommendation

On closing the Boundary Decision Survey, Stantec reported the results to Council in a draft version of this report submitted on January 19, 2023. We highlighted the change in preference from seven to five districts, noting that while the five-district arrangement was narrowly preferred, it was a significant shift in opinion. We offered our view based on the change in support for five districts in Districts 1 and 2, and comments related to preference for the five-district arrangement in the Boundary Decision Survey responses that the inability to create districts confined to Isle Madame in the seven-district scenario was a leading factor in the changed survey results. We considered after three surveys the results of consultation were inconclusive and recommended that Council choose between five- and seven-district configurations offered in the Boundary Decision Survey.

4.4.1 FINAL BOUNDARY OPTION

Council reviewed the report but chose a third course. Council met on Monday, January 23, 2023, and discussed further boundary adjustments with Stantec's Project Manager present. Council members indicated that after direct discussions with residents that they organized during January and consideration of emails and other communication with residents, they would prefer to submit a five-district arrangement that placed two districts on Isle Madame and three on the mainland.

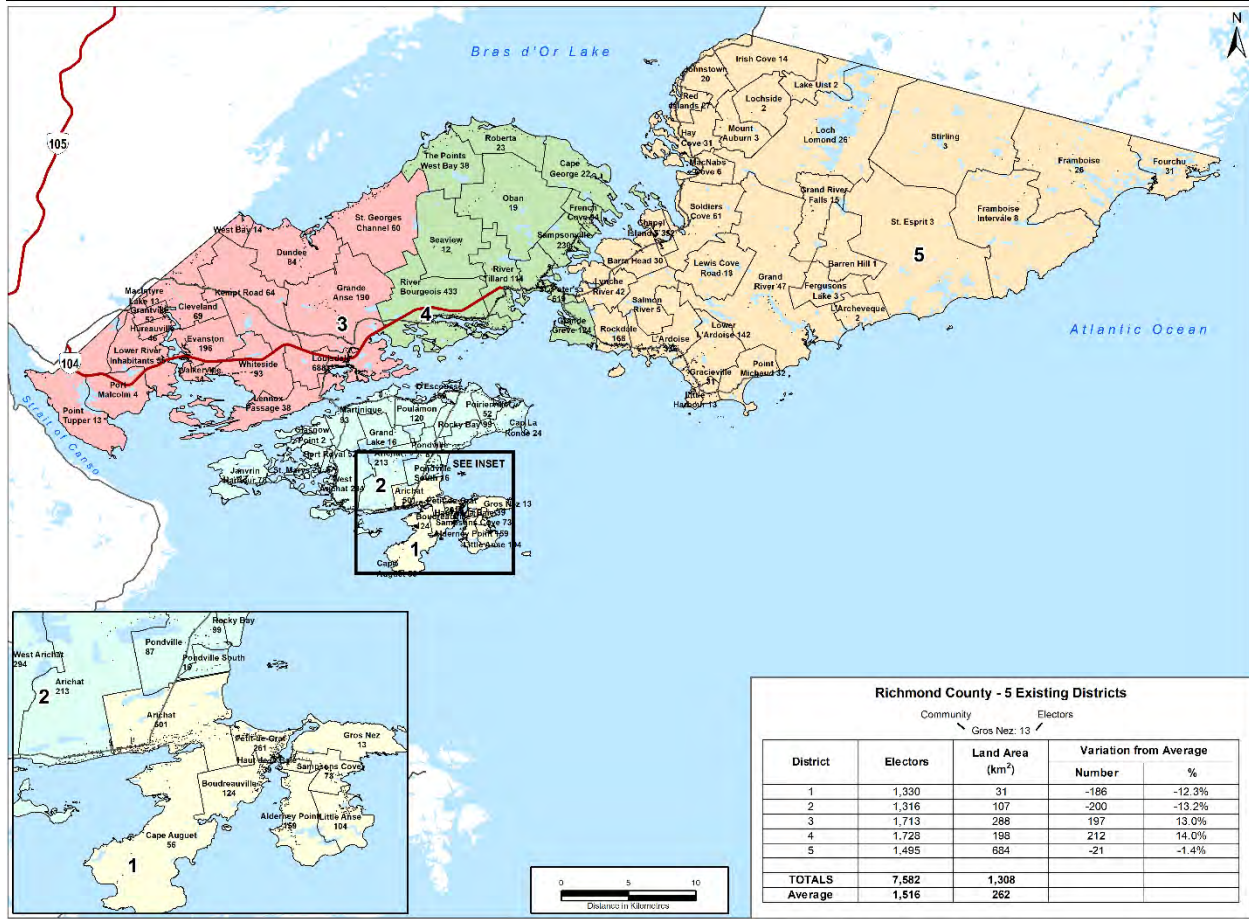
Council directed Stantec to create two districts on Isle Madame moving the current boundary between Districts 1 and 2 eastward to Binet's Lane so as to improve the balance between the two. District 2 would lose Lennox Passage and associated lands on the mainland, which would be incorporated in District 3. Stantec later determined that the addition of lands west of Binet's Lane would add 43 electors to District 2, thereby compensating for 38 electors in Lennox Passage that were removed. Council also requested that the area of River Bourgeois north of Highway 104, which contains only two electors, be added to District 4, as well as the portion of Grande Greve currently in District 5, which has 58 electors. After subsequent assessment, it was agreed that the 42 electors in Lynche River should be moved from District 4 to District 5. Stantec also suggested that all electoral district boundaries be adjusted to NSCAF community boundaries in the interests of facilitating future analysis and simplifying future map creation.

Council's final recommendation prioritized community of interest over voter parity. Four of five districts proposed by Council fall outside the $\pm 10\%$ parity criterion as shown in **Figure 4-11**. While this is more than we would normally support, Council's rationale is clear. Feedback from the public indicated that separating the representation of Isle Madame from the mainland was important to many residents. While this could not be done without infringing the parity standard, the variances on the island are moderate at -12.3% for proposed District 1 and -13.2% for proposed District 2. With the two districts proposed by Council on Isle Madame short of the average, it is difficult to avoid exceeding the standard in at least one mainland district. As configured, proposed District 3, which takes on the mainland area jettisoned by District 2, is 13.0% above average. District 4 is, however, the greatest outlier at 14.0% above average not because of any adjustment related to Isle Madame, but to address the boundary issue in Grande Greve



described in Section 3.2, above (see also Figure 3-3, above). The exchange of Lynche River, which is within current District 4, to proposed District 5 partially makes up the District's loss of electors.

Figure 4-11 Five Electoral Districts, Council Recommendation, Richmond County, 2023



Source: Stantec Consulting Limited

Proposed District 4 could be brought within $\pm 10\%$ (i.e., 9.9% over the average) by moving The Points West Bay and Roberta to proposed District 3; however, District 3 would then be 17.0% above the average. In the configuration shown, proposed Districts 3 and 4 are as balanced as appears to be possible. Proposed District 5, for its part, is the only district that satisfies the parity criterion, falling modestly short of the average (-1.4%). While assigning all of Grande Greve to District 5 would bring both proposed District 4 and proposed District 5 within the parity criterion at 5.8% and 6.8% above average respectively, it is Council's judgement that the Grande Greve community has a stronger affinity to St. Peters.



4.4.2 COUNCIL APPROVAL

Immediately following the January 23 meeting with Council, Stantec prepared a map of the electoral district boundary arrangement discussed with Council, and calculated the number of electors in each district and their variances from the average noted in the preceding two paragraphs.

On January 31, 2023, after reviewing the revised boundary arrangement and variations from the average in the number of electors in each district, Council met again with Stantec's Project Manager present. After a brief discussion of the new boundary scenario, a motion was made to adopt the arrangement as illustrated in **Figure 4-11**, above, and was passed unanimously.

While the final arrangement was not created by Stantec, we are supportive of the outcome. Council's decision prioritizes an issue that was an important thread throughout the consultation process and shaped responses to the final survey. As we have noted, it is not possible to have districts on Isle Madame with less electors than the parity standard requires without having at least one complementary district on the mainland that is over the standard. The solution approved by Council addresses the key boundary issues raised by the public without creating a district that is markedly outside the NSUARB standard.



APPENDIX A COUNCIL SIZE SURVEY RESULTS



<p>1</p>	<p>How many of the last three Richmond County elections have you voted in?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Elections</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020, 2016, 2012</td> <td>58</td> <td>55.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020, 2016</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020, 2012</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016, 2012</td> <td>2</td> <td>1.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>20</td> <td>19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>4</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>7</td> <td>6.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsure</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>104</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>2</td> <td>1.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Elections	Number	%	2020, 2016, 2012	58	55.8%	2020, 2016	10	9.6%	2020, 2012	1	1.0%	2016, 2012	2	1.9%	2020	20	19.2%	2016	4	3.8%	2012	1	1.0%	None	7	6.7%	Unsure	1	1.0%	TOTAL	104	100.0%	No response	2	1.9%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Elections</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Unsure</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>None</td> <td>7</td> <td>6.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>4</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>20</td> <td>19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016, 2012</td> <td>2</td> <td>1.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020, 2012</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020, 2016</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020, 2016, 2012</td> <td>58</td> <td>55.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Elections	Number	%	Unsure	1	1.0%	None	7	6.7%	2012	1	1.0%	2016	4	3.8%	2020	20	19.2%	2016, 2012	2	1.9%	2020, 2012	1	1.0%	2020, 2016	10	9.6%	2020, 2016, 2012	58	55.8%
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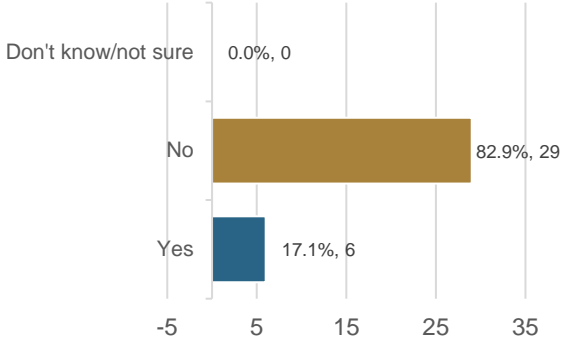
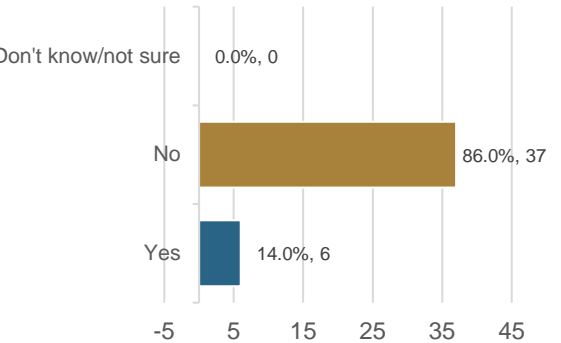


<p>3</p>	<p>How would you rate the performance of Richmond’s County Council since the 2016 election? (1 = poor 5 = excellent)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>24</td> <td>23.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>18</td> <td>17.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>39</td> <td>37.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>20</td> <td>19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>2.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>104</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>2</td> <td>1.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Number	%	1	24	23.1%	2	18	17.3%	3	39	37.5%	4	20	19.2%	5	3	2.9%	TOTAL	104	100.0%	No response	2	1.9%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>24</td> <td>23.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>18</td> <td>17.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>39</td> <td>37.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>20</td> <td>19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>2.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Number	%	1	24	23.1%	2	18	17.3%	3	39	37.5%	4	20	19.2%	5	3	2.9%
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<p>5</p>	<p>Do you think the number of elected representatives influences Council or municipal operations in any way?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>356</td> <td>67.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>111</td> <td>20.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>63</td> <td>11.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>530</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>4</td> <td>0.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Yes	356	67.2%	No	111	20.9%	Don't know/not sure	63	11.9%	TOTAL	530	100.0%	No response	4	0.7%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>356</td> <td>67.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>111</td> <td>20.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>63</td> <td>11.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Yes	356	67.2%	No	111	20.9%	Don't know/not sure	63	11.9%												
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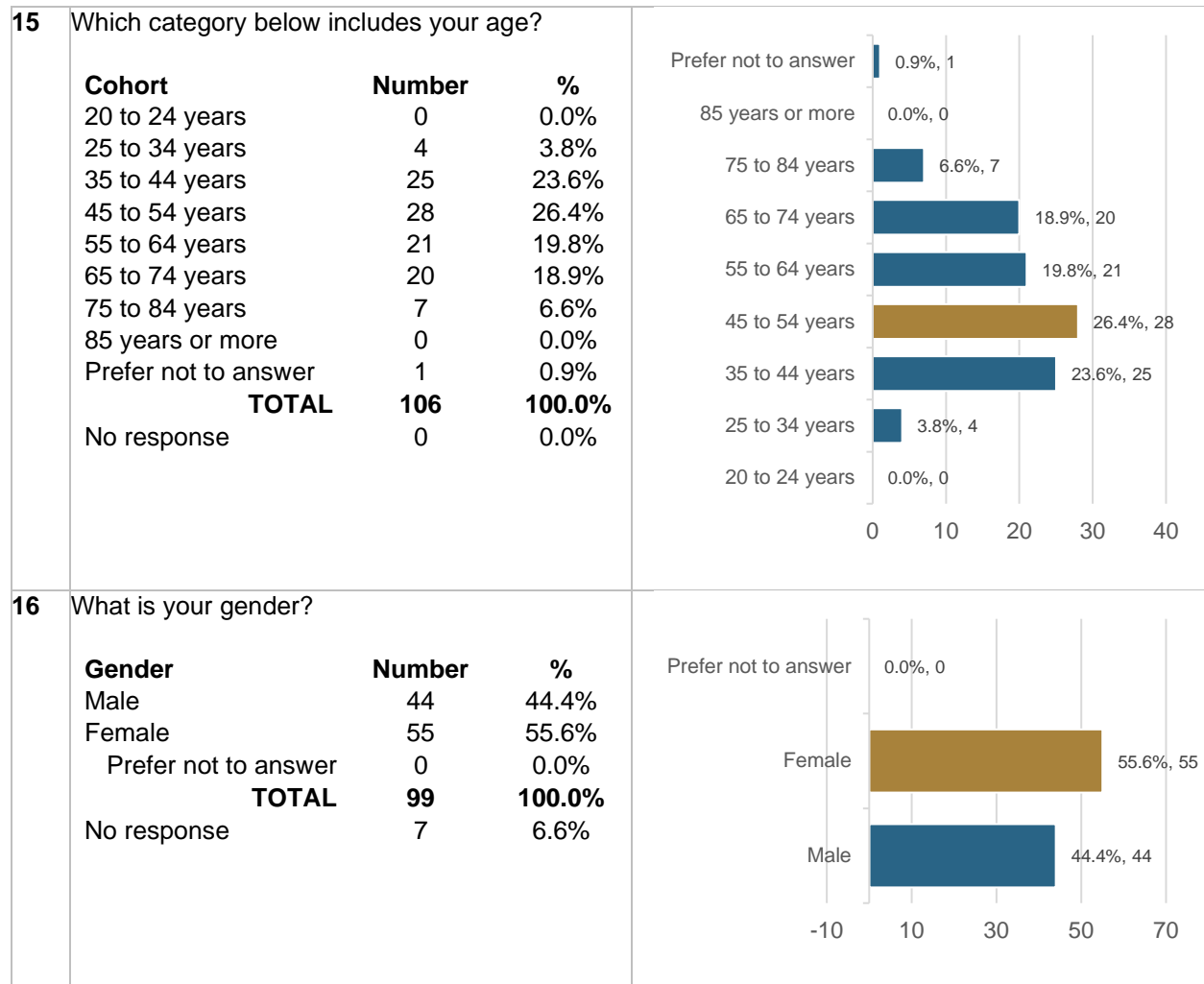


<p>7</p>	<p>Has the influence of council size or boundary changes improved Council and/or municipal performance, made it worse, or had no effect?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Improved</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed effects</td> <td>36</td> <td>34.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worsened</td> <td>38</td> <td>35.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No effect</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>12</td> <td>11.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>106</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Improved	10	9.4%	Mixed effects	36	34.0%	Worsened	38	35.8%	No effect	10	9.4%	Don't know/not sure	12	11.3%	TOTAL	106	100.0%	No response	0	0.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Improved</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed effects</td> <td>36</td> <td>34.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worsened</td> <td>38</td> <td>35.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No effect</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>12</td> <td>11.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Improved	10	9.4%	Mixed effects	36	34.0%	Worsened	38	35.8%	No effect	10	9.4%	Don't know/not sure	12	11.3%																																	
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<p>8</p>	<p>If you believe the reduction in Council size and related changes to district boundaries have influenced Council and/or municipal performance, please provide a short description of the changes you believe have occurred.</p>	<p>Those seeing improvement believe Council is more collaborative. Respondents citing mixed effects expressed concerns with representativeness but complemented accountability. Those who said Council is worse were also concerned with representaiton and the area of the districts.</p>																																																																											
<p>9</p>	<p>Please indicate the number of Council members you would prefer to have on Richmond County Council (the minimum Council size is three members).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3 members</td> <td>11</td> <td>11.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 members</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 members</td> <td>21</td> <td>21.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 members</td> <td>2</td> <td>2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 members</td> <td>40</td> <td>41.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 members</td> <td>10</td> <td>10.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 members</td> <td>4</td> <td>4.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 members</td> <td>5</td> <td>5.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 members</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 members</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 members</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 members</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 members</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>96</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>10</td> <td>9.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	3 members	11	11.5%	4 members	1	1.0%	5 members	21	21.9%	6 members	2	2.1%	7 members	40	41.7%	8 members	10	10.4%	9 members	4	4.2%	10 members	5	5.2%	11 members	1	1.0%	12 members	1	1.0%	13 members	0	0.0%	14 members	0	0.0%	15 members	0	0.0%	TOTAL	96	100.0%	No response	10	9.4%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3 members</td> <td>11</td> <td>11.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 members</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 members</td> <td>21</td> <td>21.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 members</td> <td>2</td> <td>2.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 members</td> <td>40</td> <td>41.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 members</td> <td>10</td> <td>10.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 members</td> <td>4</td> <td>4.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 members</td> <td>5</td> <td>5.2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	3 members	11	11.5%	4 members	1	1.0%	5 members	21	21.9%	6 members	2	2.1%	7 members	40	41.7%	8 members	10	10.4%	9 members	4	4.2%	10 members	5	5.2%
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<p>10</p>	<p>If your answer to Question 9 was 3 or 4, please explain why you think Council size should be decreased from its current 5 members? (if not applicable, please go to Question 13.)</p>	<p>Only eight comments. Largely critical of current governance and the cost of Council.</p>																																																																											



11	If your answer to Question 9 was 5, please explain why you think Council size should stay at 5 members? (if not applicable, please go to Question 13.)	Thirteen comments. Generally satisfied with Council. Comments suggest respondents feel Council is more cohesive (“Less squabbling”) and five is sufficient to represent major communities in the county.																														
12	If your answer to Question 9 was any choice from 6 to 15 or more, please explain why you think Council size should be increased from its current 5 members? (if not applicable, please go to Question 13.)	Comments from 35 respondents. Feel a larger Council would allow better representation of communities, including the indigenous community.																														
13	<p>Do you have any concerns with the boundaries of your district?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="264 720 808 919"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>6</td> <td>17.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>29</td> <td>82.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>35</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>71</td> <td>67.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Yes	6	17.1%	No	29	82.9%	Don't know/not sure	0	0.0%	TOTAL	35	100.0%	No response	71	67.0%	 <table border="1" data-bbox="867 653 1424 993"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>29</td> <td>82.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>6</td> <td>17.1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Don't know/not sure	0	0.0%	No	29	82.9%	Yes	6	17.1%
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APPENDIX B BOUNDARY OPTIONS SURVEY RESULTS



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<p>3</p>	<p>Do you have any concerns with the boundaries in the proposed 5-district arrangement? (View larger version of the map below)</p>	<p>Of 84 respondents (69.7%) who answered the question, 29 (35.4%) said they had no issues with the boundary arrangement. Many of the remainder raised expressed concerns directly related to having just five districts. In addition, to those stating they wanted more than five Council members, several said the districts are too large and the determination of districts puts too much emphasis on population.</p> <p>Concerns with specific boundaries included the combination of areas on Isle Madame and the Mainland, the desirability of including Whiteside and Lennox Passage with Louisdale, and the desirability of incorporating French Cove and Cape George with St. Peters. One respondent said that Chapel Island should be a separate district.</p>																																																
<p>4</p>	<p>Do you have any concerns with the boundaries in the proposed 7-district arrangement? (View larger version of the map below)</p>	<p>Of 80 (66.1%) who answered the question, 31 (38.8%) stated they had no issues with the boundaries. As with Question 3, some took the opportunity to reinforce their preference for or opposition to a larger council. Some also repeated the same concerns as they expressed with the 5-district arrangement (e.g., too much</p>																																																



		<p>emphasis on population, the need for Chapel Island to have separate representation).</p> <p>Specific boundary concerns included the desirability of including Samsonville with St. Peter's, criticism of splitting Arichat, and combining River Bourgeois with communities to its west rather than Lousidale.</p>																																	
5	<p>Please indicate which of the proposed boundary arrangements you prefer.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>36</td> <td>27.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>72</td> <td>55.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither of the above choices reflects my preference</td> <td>17</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>6</td> <td>4.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>131</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement	36	27.5%	I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement	72	55.0%	Neither of the above choices reflects my preference	17	13.0%	Don't know/not sure	6	4.6%	TOTAL	131	100.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>6</td> <td>4.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither of the above choices reflects my preference</td> <td>17</td> <td>13.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>72</td> <td>55.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>36</td> <td>27.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Don't know/not sure	6	4.6%	Neither of the above choices reflects my preference	17	13.0%	I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement	72	55.0%	I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement	36	27.5%
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6	<p>Please let us know why you chose the response you made to the previous question.</p>	<p>105 respondents (78.9%) provided comments to explain the choice they made in their answer to Question 5.</p> <p>Those favouring the 5-district arrangement cited satisfaction with the status quo and belief that Council should be small in the interests of economy and efficiency.</p> <p>Those who preferred seven members, praised the reduction in district sizes and the easing of Councillor workloads. Some also felt that the boundaries were better.</p>																																	



<p>7</p>	<p>Which category below includes your age?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cohort</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20 to 24 years</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 to 34 years</td> <td>5</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 to 44 years</td> <td>22</td> <td>16.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45 to 54 years</td> <td>26</td> <td>19.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>55 to 64 years</td> <td>34</td> <td>25.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 to 74 years</td> <td>38</td> <td>28.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75 to 84 years</td> <td>6</td> <td>4.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>85 years or more</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prefer not to answer</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>132</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Cohort	Number	%	20 to 24 years	0	0.0%	25 to 34 years	5	3.8%	35 to 44 years	22	16.7%	45 to 54 years	26	19.7%	55 to 64 years	34	25.8%	65 to 74 years	38	28.8%	75 to 84 years	6	4.5%	85 years or more	0	0.0%	Prefer not to answer	1	0.8%	TOTAL	132	100.0%	No response	2	0.4%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Cohort</th> <th>Percentage</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Prefer not to answer</td> <td>0.8%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>85 years or more</td> <td>0.0%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75 to 84 years</td> <td>4.5%</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 to 74 years</td> <td>28.8%</td> <td>38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>55 to 64 years</td> <td>25.8%</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>45 to 54 years</td> <td>19.7%</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35 to 44 years</td> <td>16.7%</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 to 34 years</td> <td>3.8%</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 to 24 years</td> <td>0.0%</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Cohort	Percentage	Count	Prefer not to answer	0.8%	1	85 years or more	0.0%	0	75 to 84 years	4.5%	6	65 to 74 years	28.8%	38	55 to 64 years	25.8%	34	45 to 54 years	19.7%	26	35 to 44 years	16.7%	22	25 to 34 years	3.8%	5	20 to 24 years	0.0%	0
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APPENDIX C COUNCIL SIZE SURVEY RESULTS



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<p>2</p>	<p>In which District do you currently reside? (See context map for reference).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>District 1</td> <td>34</td> <td>25.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 2</td> <td>28</td> <td>21.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 3</td> <td>25</td> <td>18.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 4</td> <td>28</td> <td>21.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 5</td> <td>18</td> <td>13.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>133</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District	Number	%	District 1	34	25.6%	District 2	28	21.1%	District 3	25	18.8%	District 4	28	21.1%	District 5	18	13.5%	TOTAL	0	0.0%	No response	133	100.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>District 5</td> <td>18</td> <td>13.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 4</td> <td>28</td> <td>21.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 3</td> <td>25</td> <td>18.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 2</td> <td>28</td> <td>21.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>District 1</td> <td>34</td> <td>25.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District	Number	%	District 5	18	13.5%	District 4	28	21.1%	District 3	25	18.8%	District 2	28	21.1%	District 1	34	25.6%						
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<p>3</p>	<p>Look carefully at the proposed 5-district arrangement illustrated in the following map. Do you have any concerns with any of the boundaries proposed? (CLICK HERE to view a larger version of the 5-district map)</p>	<p>The question drew comments from 66 respondents, of whom 39 (59.1%) stated they had no concerns. Of the remaining 27, respondents who favoured the seven-district arrangement frequently stated the districts were too large. There were also several mentions of the combination of mainland communities with areas on Isle Madame as well as one criticizing the inclusion of River Bourgeois in District 4 with St. Peters.</p>																																																
<p>4</p>	<p>Look carefully at the proposed 7-district arrangement illustrated on the following map. Do you have any concerns with any of the boundaries proposed? (CLICK HERE to view a larger version of the 7-district map)</p>	<p>Of 68 commenters, 29 stated they had no issues (43.9%). Many commenters who favoured five districts expressed support for maintaining the status quo. Eight commenters expressed objection to the combination of areas from Isle Madame and the mainland.</p>																																																



Richmond Governance and Boundary Review
Council Size Survey Results

<p>5</p>	<p>Please indicate which of the proposed boundary arrangements you prefer.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>57</td> <td>45.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>54</td> <td>43.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither of the above choices reflects my preference</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>14</td> <td>11.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>125</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement	57	45.6%	I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement	54	43.2%	Neither of the above choices reflects my preference	0	0.0%	Don't know/not sure	14	11.2%	TOTAL	125	100.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Number</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Don't know/not sure</td> <td>14</td> <td>11.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither of the above choices reflects my preference</td> <td>0</td> <td>0.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>54</td> <td>43.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement</td> <td>57</td> <td>45.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Number	%	Don't know/not sure	14	11.2%	Neither of the above choices reflects my preference	0	0.0%	I prefer the proposed 7-district boundary arrangement	54	43.2%	I prefer the proposed 5-district boundary arrangement	57	45.6%																																	
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9	Do you have any additional comments to provide on the Governance and District Boundary Study?	48 respondents (35.6%) provided detailed comments. Some comments questioned the need for a third survey. Others commented on the boundary arrangements with significantly more reference to issues with the seven-district arrangement. Many comments also supported the status quo or avoiding changes that the respondents considered unnecessary.
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