



Subject: *2022 Polling District Review Report # 3, Phase 1 Size of Council*
To: CAO for Corporate & Residential Services Committee, April 19, 2022
Date Prepared: April 12, 2022
Related Motions: CRS22(3), CRS22(4), CRS22(5), CRS22(22)
Prepared by: John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, Chief Administrative Officer

Summary

This third report on the polling district review discusses proposed public consultation for Phase 1 and provides a jurisdictional scan showing voters per district within comparable municipalities.

Financial Impact Statement

There is no financial impact as a result of adopting this report. Advertising and hall rental costs associated with this project have been provided for in the 2022-23 Operating Budget.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation associated with the report

Recommended Motion

none

Background

This is the third report regarding the 2022 Polling District Review. Decisions made by Council to date include:

- Endorsed the project moving ahead
- Sought approval from the NS Utility & Review Board for up to a year's extension due to Covid 19. The Board granted up to a 6 month extension.
- Decided to keep the Warden system and not seek public opinion on switching to a Mayoral system of leadership.

This report discusses scheduled public consultation for Phase 1 of the review and provides a jurisdictional scan showing voters per district within comparable municipalities.

Polling District Review - Phase 1

Phase 1 of the review involves deciding on the size of council. Council's earlier decision to stay with the Warden system of leadership simplifies this phase.

The Board considers that the first phase of the review/application process should involve municipal councils determining, prior to considering boundary delineations and voter parity analysis, the appropriate number of councilors for the municipality. The Board considers this decision to be extremely important and one that should be made only following consultation with senior staff and the public. The Board indicates that when determining the appropriate size of council, key considerations should be the desired style of council, the governance structure of council, and a determination of an effective and efficient number of councilors.

One example of how the 'governance structure of council' varies between municipal units is that larger municipalities such as HRM may have community councils, comprised of several councilors from an area, that have discretionary decision-making powers for within that area (planning approvals, recreation, etc.), while in units such as East Hants decisions are made by council as a whole.

Another factor would be whether Council is led by a mayor or warden. If a mayor system exists, Council may want to take that additional elected representative into consideration.

Public Consultation

In the January report, staff outlined public consultation proposed to take place with each phase. In keeping with that report, the following community meetings have been arranged to garner public feedback on the size of Council:

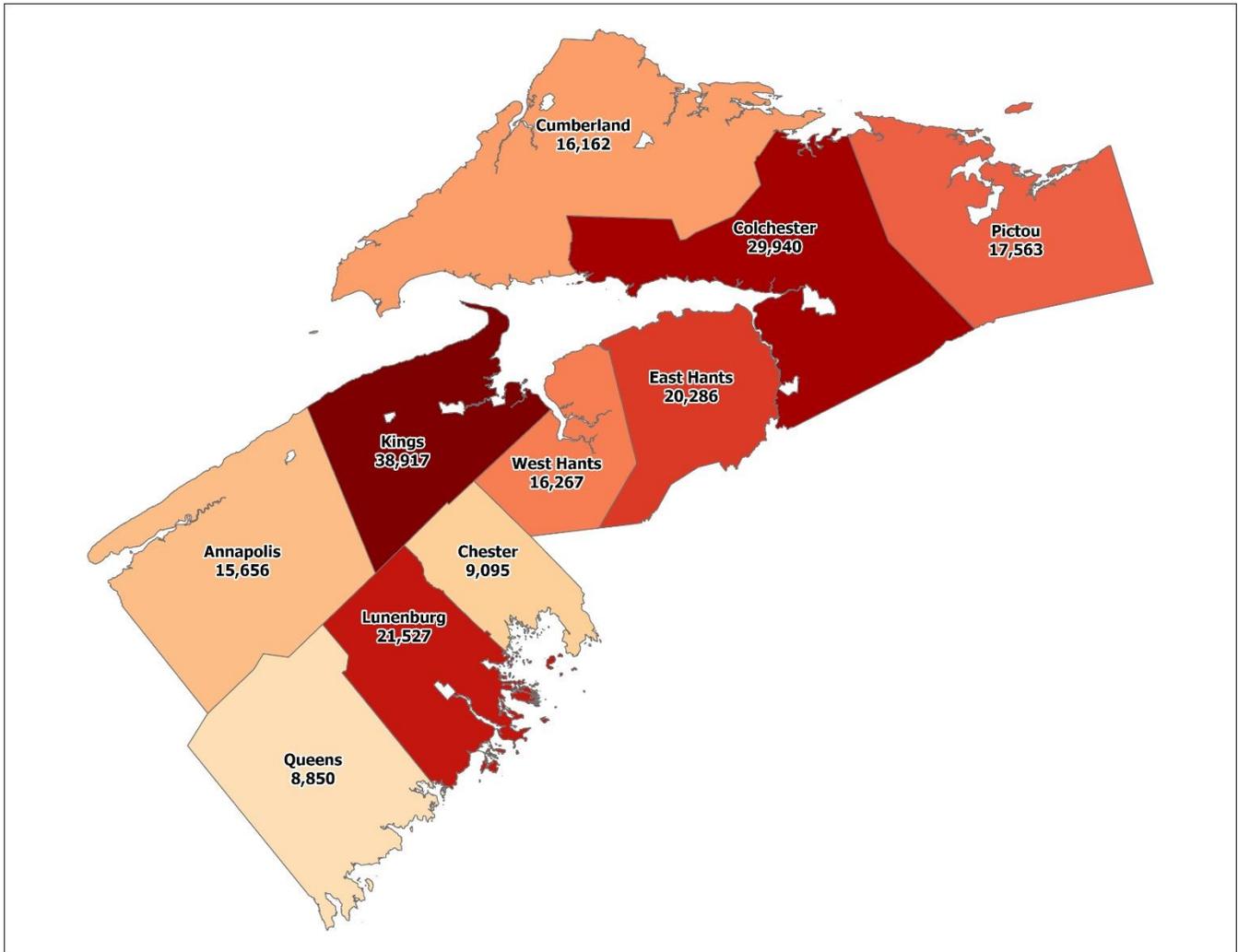
- May 16th Kennetcook Fire Hall
- May 17th Lloyd E. Matheson Centre
- May 18th Uniacke Fire Hall

An on-line survey will also go live later this month providing another opportunity for feedback.

Once these events are complete, Staff will bring forward a report regarding the size of Council. Once a decision is made on the size of Council, Phase 2 of the project will begin.

Jurisdictional Scan

The following comparable municipal units have been identified as a useful benchmark.



Jurisdictional Scan

Municipality	# of Districts/Councillors	Style of Leadership	Total Voters	Voters per District
Region of Queens	7	Mayor	8850	1264
District of Chester	7	Warden	9095	1299
Annapolis County	11	Warden	15656	1423
Pictou County	12	Warden	17563	1464
Region of West Hants	11	Mayor	16267	1479
District of East Hants	11	Warden	20286	1844
Cumberland County	8	Mayor	16162	2020
AVERAGE (not including East Hants)				2016
District of Lunenburg	10	Mayor	21527	2153
Colchester County	11	Mayor	29940	2722
Kings County	9	Mayor	38917	4324

Conclusion

Staff have provided an update on Phase 1 public consultation and outlined the factors that should go into deciding the size of Council including governance structure, public input and examining comparable municipal units.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation associated with this report.