

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE BOUNDARY REVIEW ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

1.1 THE ONLINE SURVEY

During the period between June 10th and July 4th, an online community survey was available to residents via a link on the Municipality of the District of Argyle (MODA) website and Facebook page. The survey provided an opportunity for those interested in the issues presented to provide their input. Due to the nature of online surveys, it should be noted that the results presented in this memo do not represent a true random sample of MODA's population.

Respondents were asked questions under a series of themes, including:

- 1 Councillor Roles and Responsibilities
- 2 Important Qualities of a Councillor
- 3 Number of Councillors

The main findings of the survey have been summarized in the following paragraphs.

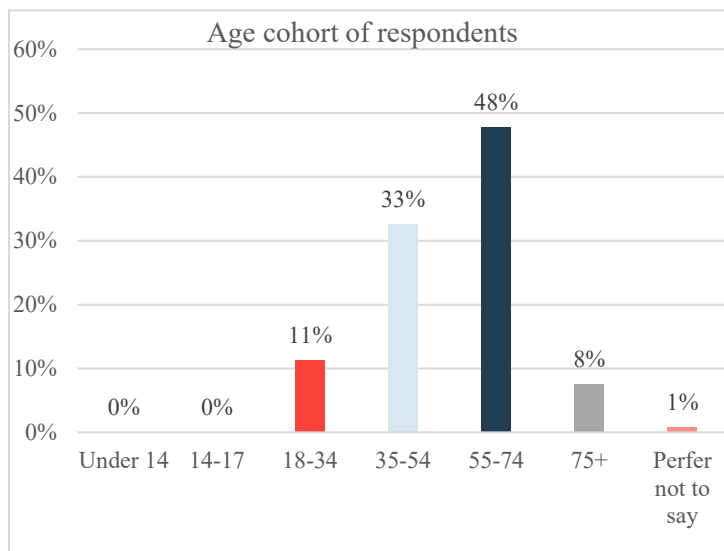
SURVEY RESULTS:

Over a period of June 10th and July 4th, the survey was completed by a total of 134 individuals.

AGE CATEGORIES

Q1: When asked which age category they represent, respondents answered:

Almost half (48%) of participants fell under the age category of 55-74. One third (33%) of the participants were between the ages of 35-54. Just over 10% were between the ages of 18-34 and less than 8% were 75 or older. Of the participants none were under the age of 17 and less than 1% preferred not to specify their age.



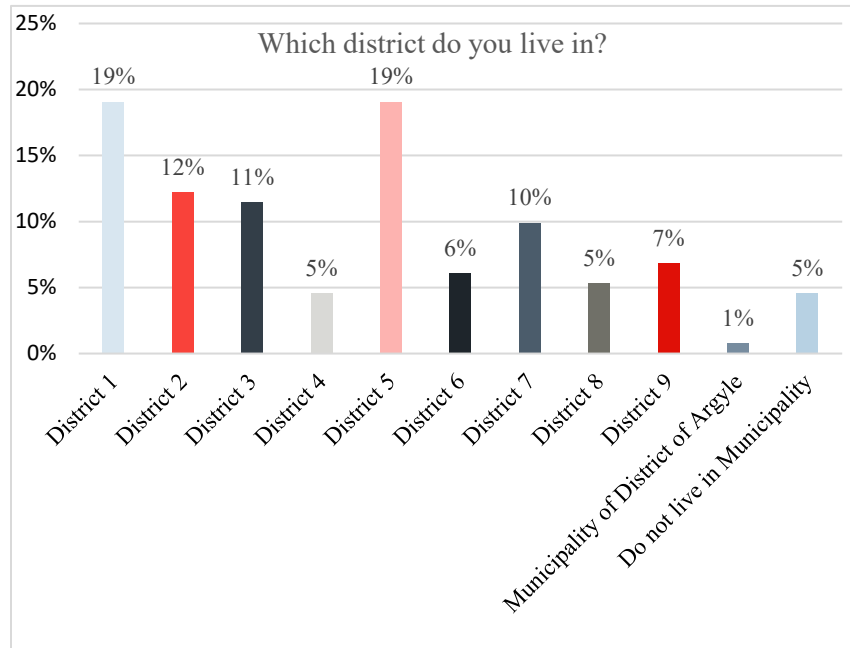
1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

LOCATION

Q2: When asked which District of the Municipality of Argyle they live in, respondents answered:

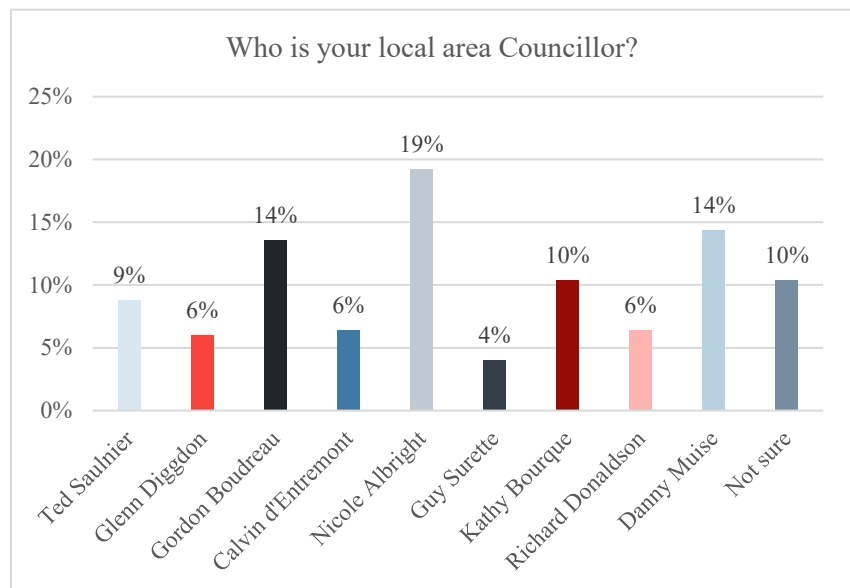
Over on third (40%) of respondents live in either District 1 (Tusket, Hubbard's Point, Abram's River, Gravelton, Pleasant Lake, Little Egypt, East Kemptonville) or District 5 (Ste. -Anne du Ruisseau, Eel Brook, Belleville, Bellneck, Springhaven and Quinan), while less than 6% of respondents indicated 'they do not live in the Municipality' or 'Municipality of the District of Argyle'.



CURRENT AREA COUNCILLORS

Q3: When asked who their councillor was. Respondents answered:

Just below one fifth (20%) of respondents have Nicole Albright as their area Councillor, while 14% have Gordon Boudreau and 14% have Danny Muise as their Councillor. Of the remaining respondents, votes fell somewhat evenly among the different area Councillors, each being recognized by less than 10% of respondents. Only 10% of respondents were unsure who their Councillor was.



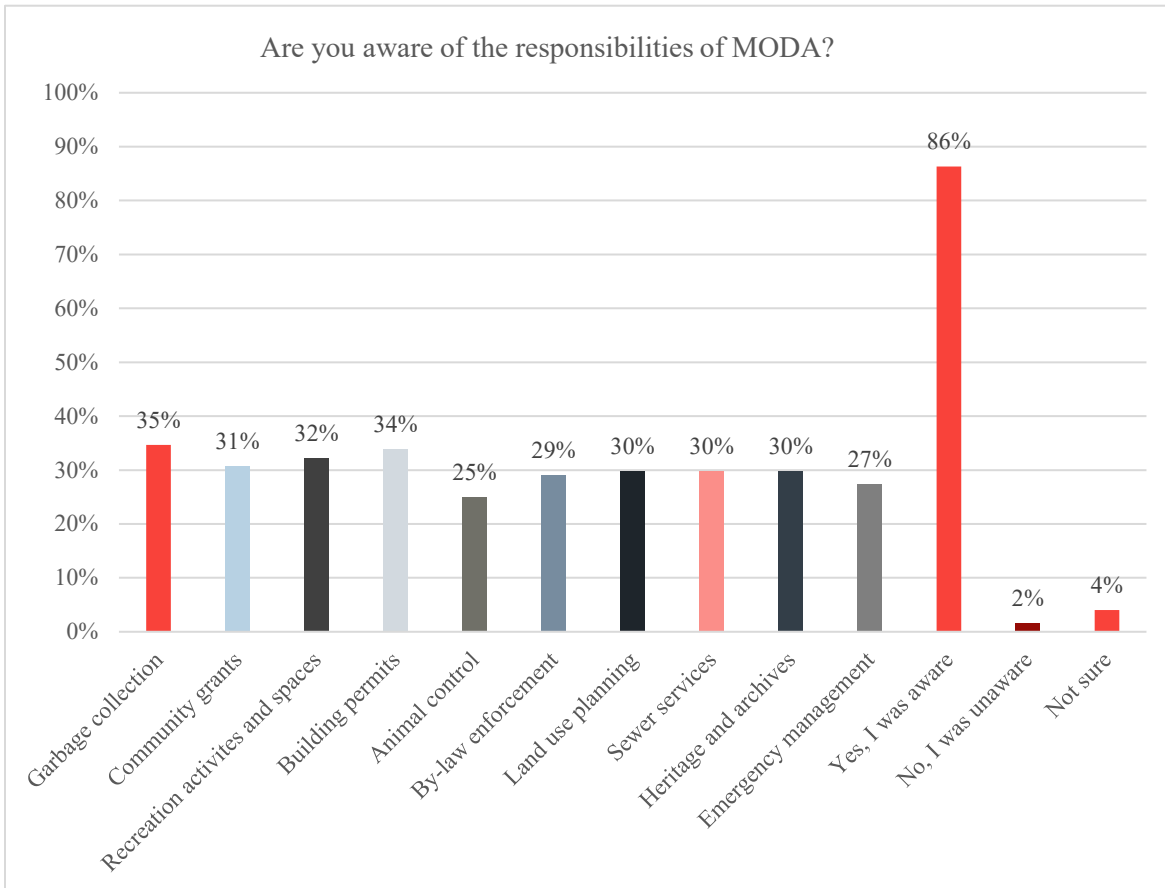
1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

MUNICIPALITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE

Q4: Respondents were asked if they were aware of the Municipality of the District of Argyle's responsibilities.

Respondents answered:



Over three quarters (86.29%) of respondents were aware of MODA's responsibilities, while less than 6% were either not aware or unsure of their responsibilities. The remaining votes fell evenly among the different responsibilities that were outlined in the survey; each being recognized by one third of the respondents.

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

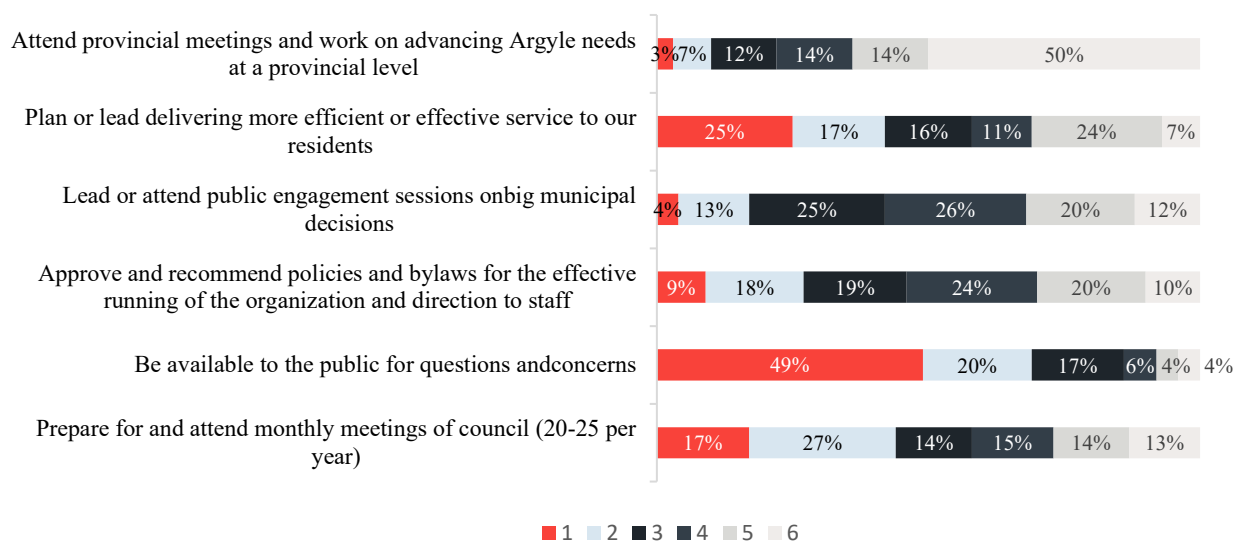
COUNCILLOR'S ROLE

Q5: Respondents were asked to rank what they think a Councillor's role should be (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important).

The top three most important roles of a Councillor as indicated by survey respondents were:

- 1 Be available to the public for questions and concerns
- 2 Plan or lead delivering more efficient or effective service to our residents
- 3 Prepare for and attend monthly meetings of council (20-25 per year)

What is the Role of a Councillor?



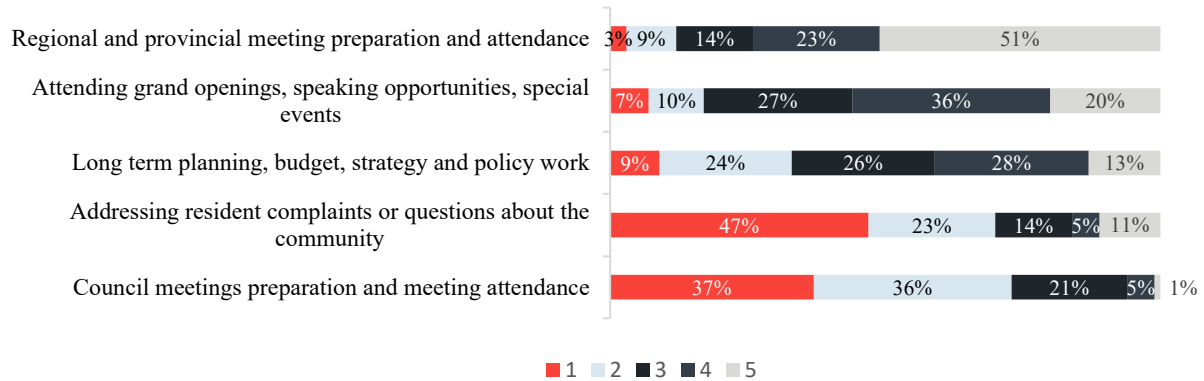
Following the top three most important roles of a Councillor, the least important roles identified by respondents were 'attending provincial meetings and work on advancing Argyle's needs at a provincial level' receiving 55 votes. The next least important identified by respondents was 'Prepare for and attend monthly meetings of council (20-25 per year)' (14 votes) and 'Lead or attend public engagement sessions on big municipal decisions' (14 votes).

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

Q6: Respondents were asked to identify how they believe their Councillor spends most of their time and energy, with 1 being the most amount of time, and 5 being the least amount of time. Respondents answered:

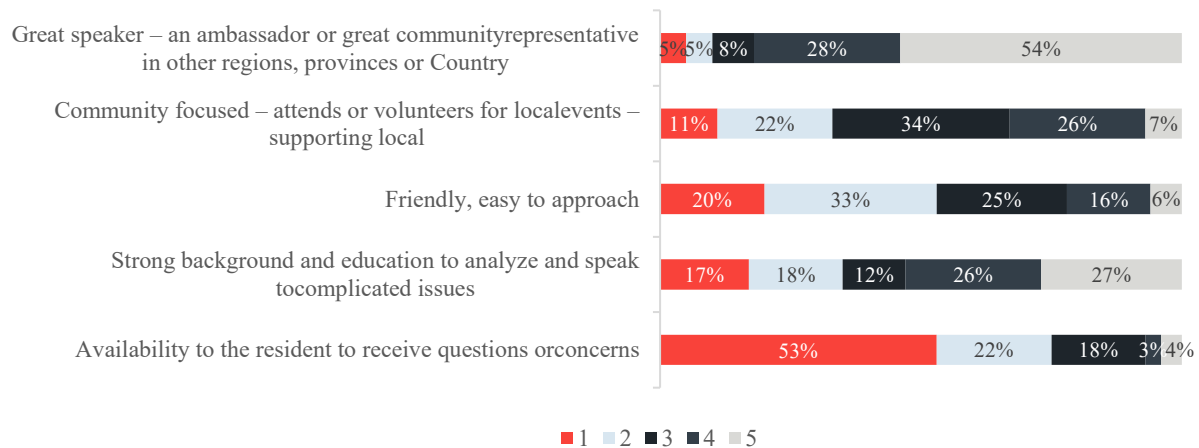
How Councillor spends most of their time and energy



Just under half (47%) respondents believe that Councillors most frequently spend their time and energy addressing resident complaints or questions about the community, and 37% believe Councillors are more frequently preparing/attending Council meetings. Respondents indicated ‘Regional and Provincial meeting preparation and attendance’ (51%) and ‘Attending grand openings, speaking opportunities, special events’ as the least frequent activity Councillors spend their time and energy on.

Q7: Respondents were asked what the most important qualities are to look for in a Councillor. (1 being the most important and 5 being the least important). Respondents answered:

Important Qualities of a Councillor



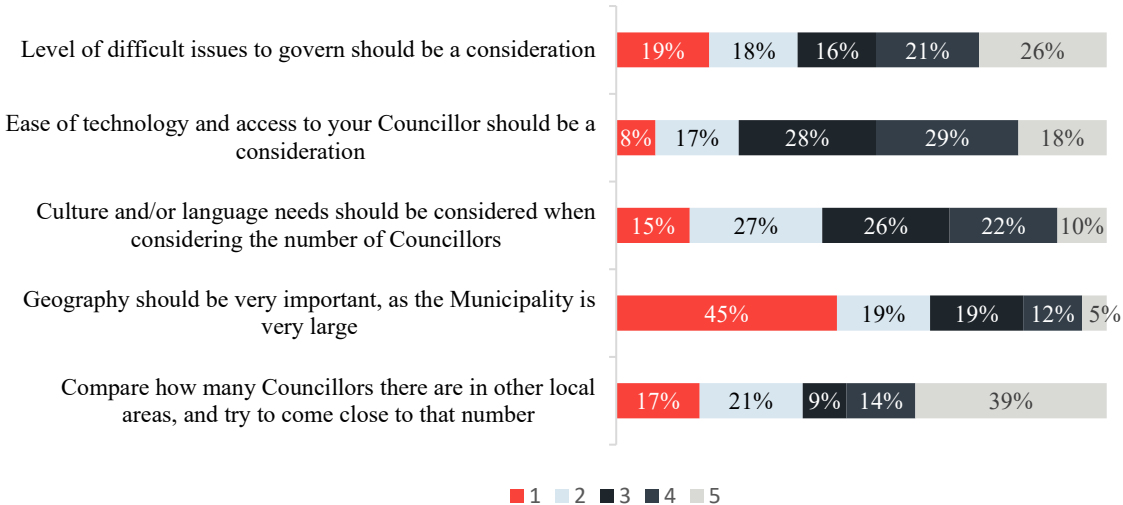
The most important quality of a Councillor was ‘Attending grand openings, speaking opportunities, special events’ indicated by 52% of respondents, while the quality of ‘Great speaker – an ambassador or great community representative in other regions, provinces or Country’ was recognized as the least important quality by 54% of respondents. The next important Councillor quality looked for by respondents was ‘Friendly, easy to approach’ (20%) and ‘strong background and education to analyze and speak to complicated issues’ (17%).

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

Q8: Respondents were asked what aspects are considered to be the most important when making an informed decision about the number of Councillors that serve the Municipality of the District of Argyle (1 being the most important and 5 being the least important). Respondents answered:

Important Aspects when Determining Number of Councillors



The most important aspect recognized by 45% of respondents, was ‘Geography should be very important, as the Municipality is very large’. The next most important aspect identified (19% of respondents) was ‘level of difficult issues to govern should be a consideration’. 16% of respondents indicated that one of the most important aspects to be considered when making an informed decision about the number of Councillors was to ‘Compare how many Councillors there are in other local areas, and try to come close to that number’, while over one third (39%) recognize this as the least important aspect.

Q9: Respondents were asked to rank the following statements from most important (1) to least important (4).

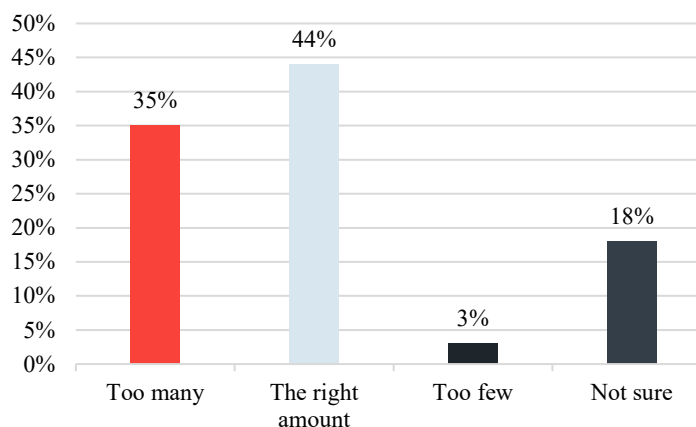


Half (50%) of respondents indicated ‘Municipalities are taking on more and more and we need a sufficient number of Councillors to govern the organization’ as the most important statement, while 36% of respondents indicated they ‘favour cost reduction over representation a reasonable cost is primary’ as the least important.

NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

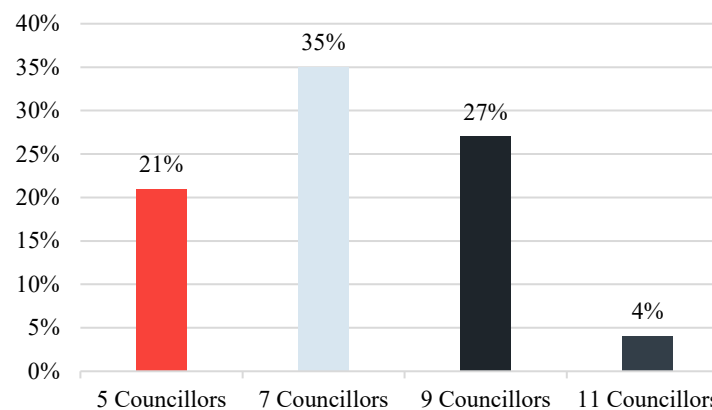
Q10: Currently the Municipality of the District of Argyle has 8 Councillors and a Warden, who collectively serve approximately 7,670 residents. Respondents were asked based on their previous knowledge, what statement best represents their view on the current number of Councillors. Respondents answered:

Just under half (44%) of the respondents think there is the 'right amount' of Councillors, while over one third (35%) believe there is 'too many.' Just under 3% feel as if there are 'too few' Councillors and 18% were unsure.



Q11: When asked what number of Councillors make the most sense, respondents answered:

Just over three quarters (35%) identified '7 Councillors – This seems to be what other municipalities our size agreed to – decisions are made more effectively' as the right amount of Councillors, while 27% indicated '9 Councillors – There was a lot of analysis done before on this and I think the number still makes sense' made the most sense for the number of Councillors in the Municipality of the District of Argyle. Over 20% identified '5 Councillors – Our needs are different now and we need far fewer Councillors to govern our smaller municipality', while 4% indicated '11 Councillors – We don't have enough representation and we need to invest more money on Councillors to be heard' as the required number of Councillors to satisfy residents needs.



Of the 13% of respondents who answered 'Other', their responses included:

- 8 Councillors (e.g. Similar to other jurisdictions; constituents per politician ratio is more important than geography) (4 votes)
- Each community should have at least one (1) Councillor
- 6 Councillors (2 votes)
- 9 Councillors
- East Kemptville should have a dedicated Councillor only to that area (2 votes)
- Number of Councillors should be based on population.

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Finally, respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts or comments regarding the number of Councillors serving the Municipality of the District of Argyle. Summarized responses include:

- East Kemptville lacks representation other than during election
- Unaware of the correct number of Councillors (e.g. unknown current cost/workload of each Councillor) (4)
- Some areas within the Municipality do not need more than one Councillor (e.g. Wedgeport, Pubnico) (6)
- If less Councillors are chosen, I want to ensure I have adequate access and representation
- Values are the most important trait of a Councillor
- All Councillors including the Warden, should be chosen at large
- The number of Councillors need to be reduced (4)
- Local Councillors are currently not fulfilling their duties (3)

DIVING DEEPER

As the last two questions of the survey did not provide a clear indication of whether residents preferred to see the number of Councillors remain the same (9 Councillors) or to lessen to 7. To further understand what the 18% of respondents indicated who indicated in Question 10 that they were ‘not sure’ if the number of Councillors is correct for the Municipality a “deeper dive” analysis was done to understand how those individuals answered Question 11. Of those 18% survey respondents that indicated they weren’t sure if the current number of Councillors was *too many, the right amount, or too few*, there was still a relatively even split on what statements they agreed with in the following question.

Responses from the 18% who answered “Not sure” in Question 10, gave the following responses for Question 11:

- 5 Councillors (17%)
- 7 Councillors (28%)
- 9 Councillors (28%)
- 11 Councillors (5%)
- Other (22%)

This provides a clear indication that further investigation through public consultation in Step 2 is required in order to determine the correct number of Councillors for the Municipality of the District of Argyle.

1.2 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

As a part of the public engagement process, WSP organized and led a series of three (3) open houses over a period of two (2) days during the week of June 6, 2022. These open houses were held in three (3) different geographic communities with the intent of providing opportunities for residents across the municipality to provide input and learn about the process. The open houses were held at the Wedgeport Fire Hall on Tuesday, June 7th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, the municipal administration building in Tusket on Wednesday, June 8th from 2:30pm to 4:00pm and on June 8th at the West Pubnico Legion from 6:30pm to 8:00pm.



Figure 1: Open house set up in Wedgeport, June 7, 2022.

The open houses were designed to provide residents with information about the process and allow various opportunities for them to provide input on the number of councillors that they view as the best for serving the municipality. Each room was set up similarly, with a sign-up page and hard copies of the online survey available to fill out in person or to take home and drop off later to the municipal building. Display boards were also set up around the room, with information about the boundary review process, overviews of the existing municipal structure and details of the services currently provided by the municipality. Two (2) interactive boards were also set up with select questions pertaining to the number of councillors, as well as questions that asked residents to place dots on a scale to indicate preferences for fewer, the same, or more councillors. The boards also included QR codes that residents could scan with a cellphone, linking them to the online survey. Finally, a 10-minute Powerpoint presentation was set up at each open house, where, midway through the event, WSP gave an overview of the boundary review process, spoke about the current municipal structure and asked residents to provide input on the process through one of the available methods. There were also opportunities for group discussion and questions and answers after the presentation.

Advertising of the open houses was conducted by the Municipality of the District of Argyle and included a variety of methods. Municipal staff set up a webpage with information about the process and promoted the open houses on their Facebook page in the weeks leading up to the open houses, which is the primary source of communication with residents. Municipal councillors were also encouraged to promote the events to their constituents. Finally, the municipality advertised the open houses through segments that were broadcast on the local radio station.

A small group of councillors attended the Wedgeport open house held on June 7th, however no residents came out to the event. The open house held in Tusket at the municipal administration building was advertised as a hybrid event, which could be attended in person or by connecting through Zoom. However, no residents responded to the

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com



Figure 2: Interactive boards at the open house in Wedgeport, June 7, 2022.

invitation to participate online, and therefore the event was only held in person. Similar to the open house in Wedgeport, a handful of councillors attended, but no local residents came. The final open house held in West Pubnico on June 8th was attended by a handful of residents, in addition to some of the local councillors. Residents who attended the West Pubnico event participated in group discussion and there was a mix of opinions on whether the current number of councillors was most appropriate, or whether the number should be lower. Residents that attended filled out hard copies of the online survey, and WSP staff later

inputted their answers into the online survey questionnaire in order to ensure the input was appropriately captured.

Finally, due to the low turnout and lack of responses to the hybrid open house, a presentation video was recorded by WSP staff giving the same presentation that was available at the open houses. The presentation was then posted to the municipality's website, along with links to the online survey and additional information about the process. Subsequent advertising promoted the website and allowed residents to learn about the process and provide feedback in the following weeks.

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

1.3 WHAT WE HEARD

Overall, the responses to the public online survey and open houses for the Municipality of the District of Argyle (MoDA) Electoral Boundary Review was strong and most feedback received was constructive and will lead to meaningful input to determining the correct number of Councillors for MoDA.

Many participants mentioned that while they were in support of the project, they felt like more information in regard to the current role and responsibilities and current cost/workload of Councillors in MoDA is necessary to make informed decisions in determining the number of Councillors.

Summary of Key Themes

A wide variety of topics emerged from the engagement process that were grouped into three main themes:

1. **Councillor roles and responsibilities:** Respondents felt the most important role of a councillor to be available to the public through addressing resident complaints or questions about the community and frequently preparing/attending Council meetings.
2. **Important qualities in Councillors:** Respondents felt the most important quality of a Councillor is to be present within the community and attending grand openings, speaking opportunities, special events, and being easy to approach by residents.
3. **Numbers of Councillors:** Just below half (44%) of respondents felt that the current number of Councillors were the right amount for MoDA, while just above one third (35%) felt there is too many Councillors for MoDA. Topics from this theme arose including efficiency and how the number of councillors will reflect that. Residents feel as though if there are too many councillors they won't be as effective in their duties.

Moving Forward with Proposed Projects

Residents expressed that they feel that the role of a councillor is very important to the municipality and residents. Participants throughout this study expressed they feel one of the most important roles of a councillor is to be available to the public. This could be in the form of being able to spend their time and energy addressing resident complaints of questions about the community, preparing, and attending council meetings, grand openings speaking opportunities and special events. The majority of participants felt as though through being available to the public will in turn allow for councillors to exert their energy more efficiently and effectively into the public, creating more positive impacts.

A number of participants noted important qualities of a councillor and the impact these qualities have on the outcome and efficiency of decisions and problem solving. Many felt that having councillors present at community events and grand openings was one of the most important roles of a councillor. Being present for the community, was deemed just as important as the geographical location of the councillor when deciphering how to best serve the municipality of Argyle. Participants expressed that geography should be playing a significant role given the municipality is very large.

Participants expressed concern that some areas within the municipality should only have one Councillor rather than two. They expressed having an adequate number of Councillors is important for each area to be represented adequately and effectively (i.e. resident concerns, decisions for the municipality, etc.). Additional common points that were raised included: Additional common points that were raised included:

- Unaware of the correct number of Councillors (e.g. unknown current cost/workload of each Councillor)

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com

- Some areas within the Municipality do not need more than one Councillor (e.g. Wedgeport, Pubnico)
- The number of Councillors need to be reduced
- Local Councillors are currently not fulfilling their duties

1.4 NEXT STEPS

Phase 1 of the Municipal Councillor and Boundary review for MODA has shown that there are inconclusive results as to how the community feels regarding the number of councillors there should be in the community. While the feedback received was valuable in understanding residents' knowledge and desires for Council, the question as to whether or not there should be fewer councillors going forward or if the same number of councillors remain. Based on the feedback from the survey, the conclusion that more councillors is not the desired or preferred option from residents.

Phase 2 of the Municipal Councillor and Boundary review also recommends public consultation to help inform district boundary lines. Since this is a required step in this Provincially mandated exercise, it is recommended that MODA move forward with Phase 2 and utilize this opportunity to continue engagement with residents on the number of councillors concurrent to the placement of district boundary lines. During Phase 2's round of engagement, MODA should consider presenting residents with illustrated options of what a revised 9-councillor/district version of the municipality would look like along side an option of a 7 councillor/district version. By presenting these two options to residents, members of the public get to visually see what the boundary lines for the municipality could look like under the two scenarios (9 councillors or 7 councillors) and will help them make a more informed decision on their preferred boundary line delineation and Council make-up.

1 Spectacle Lake Drive
Dartmouth, NS
Canada B3B 1X7

T: +1 902-835-9955
F: +1 902-835-1645
wsp.com