

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF  
CLARE

**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT  
OF CLARE BOUNDARY REVIEW:  
BOUNDARIES REPORT**

February 20, 2018

**MUNICIPALITÉ de CLARE**  
BUREAU MUNICIPAL · MUNICIPAL OFFICE



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## **MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF CLARE BOUNDARY REVIEW: BOUNDARIES REPORT**

Final report summarizing the results of research and consultations to determine the appropriate number of councillors and polling district boundaries for their election to serve residents of the Municipality of the District of Clare.



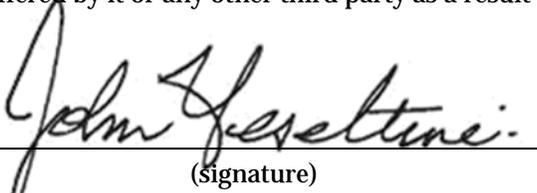
Prepared for:  
Municipality of the District of  
Clare

Prepared by:  
Stantec Consulting Ltd.

February 20, 2018

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Municipality of the District of Clare has conducted two boundary reviews since late 2014 but has yet to satisfy the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) that it has conducted an adequate consultation process. Although the Board approved the second application of the Municipality to maintain its current council size in December 2016, its decision required Clare “to conduct a proper study regarding the fairness and reasonableness of the number of councillors and polling districts, and district boundaries, consistent with the requirements in ss. 368 and 369 of the [Municipal Government] Act.”

Stantec was selected to carry out the required study and has employed the two-phase approach recommended by the NSUARB. This Boundaries Report is the output of the second and final phase, and building on our work in Phase 1 through which we focused on the appropriate council size to serve Clare.

### Background Review

The Municipality of the District of Clare has been governed by an eight-member council over a long period; perhaps, its entire municipal history. It is generally conceded that the last comprehensive review of council size and boundaries in Clare was heard by the NSUARB in 1994. The Municipality has applied to maintain its council at eight members at every subsequent review. It has also made very modest changes to the boundaries of its polling districts.

Clare Councillors continue to want to maintain a council of eight members. They contend that the Municipality is successful and Council has been effective. Most however have stated their willingness to accept a reduction in council membership if that is the clear public preference.

The Clare Civic Association has fought for consideration of council size reduction through the two most recent boundary reviews, advocating for a council of five. In decisions rendered in 2015 and 2016, the NSUARB accepted the views of the Association concerning the review processes conducted by the Municipality leading to the Board’s prescription of the current third review.

### Council Size Assessment

The population of the Municipality of the District of Clare has been declining. With eight members, Clare municipal council is tied with several others as the 11<sup>th</sup> largest among 21 rural municipal councils in the province. On a per capita basis, the average Clare Councillor serves 1,002 constituents, which ranks 16<sup>th</sup>. By land area, they average 106.6 square kilometres of territory within each district, which is 20<sup>th</sup>.

Although the foregoing indicators point to a smaller council, it is notable that the cost of government administration in Clare is low relative to other rural municipalities based on its percentage of total government expenditure (14<sup>th</sup>) and expenditure per capita (18<sup>th</sup>). Clare Council salaries rank in the bottom third. At \$20.90 per constituent served, however, they are 50% above the average for Nova Scotia rural council members. Further analysis by Stantec, nevertheless, suggests that compensation is in line with the distribution of council compensation among Nova Scotia’s rural municipal governments.

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### Council Size Consultation

Stantec conducted an online survey with support from Clare municipal staff. The survey was well-promoted and was assisted by the interest of provincial and local media in the issue. Over the course of roughly a month from mid-December to mid-January, the survey attracted 512 respondents from Clare residents or 7.1% of the population 15 years of age or older in the municipality. Responses came from communities across Clare and the full range of age groups over 15. Most respondents were familiar with local government as more than 85% voted in at least one of the past three municipal elections in Clare.

The survey posed two opinion questions. On the critical issue of council size preference, the current council of eight was the choice of 46.9% of respondents to the question. The next most popular response was five members (21.7%). Overall, 55.4% of respondents would prefer a council the same or larger than the current eight members, while 44.6% would like council size to be reduced

Stantec held a public meeting on January 16, 2018, to present the results of research completed in Phase 1 of the project. The meeting attracted a good crowd of 60 to 70 people. Following a presentation of research findings by Stantec's Project Manager, several residents made formal presentations, all of which supported maintenance of the current council membership. Several following speakers also expressed support for continuing with the current council size, although two representatives of the Civic Association spoke for reducing council membership.

### Boundary Review

Although, the public preference for the status quo was clearly conveyed, Stantec considered it advisable to assess the challenges and potential benefits of a five-district framework as well as an eight-district framework to ensure all views were taken into account. Five members was selected as the alternative to eight because it was advocated by the Clare Civic Association and because it was the second most preferred response to Question 4 in our online survey.

Public consultation for this review was extensive. The online survey received 512 responses from residents of Clare and more than 100 residents attended the two public meetings we conducted. The process has been well-covered by the local press as well as receiving fortuitous attention from provincial-level media, which gives us confidence that residents of Clare were broadly aware of the Boundary Review and the opportunities for their participation.

While a constituency in Clare wants the size of the Municipality's Council to be reduced, each round of public input confirmed to our satisfaction that the majority of Clare residents would prefer to continue with an eight-member municipal council. Members of the Clare Civic Association articulated sound arguments for council size reduction and others supported their views but more voices in the community spoke for the status quo, which they clearly consider important to the maintenance of the Francophone linguistic identity of the municipality.

*Given the foregoing, we recommend that residents of the Municipality of the District of Clare continue to be represented by eight Council members elected from eight districts conforming to the boundaries shown in **Figure 5-5**, below.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of the District of Clare has conducted two boundary reviews since late 2014 but has yet to satisfy the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) that it has conducted an adequate consultation process. Although the Board approved the second application of the Municipality to maintain its current council size in December 2016, its decision required Clare “to conduct a proper study regarding the fairness and reasonableness of the number of councillors and polling districts, and district boundaries, consistent with the requirements in ss. 368 and 369 of the [Municipal Government] Act.”

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

While the NSUARB considered the districts defined for the election of Clare Council members appropriate in terms of voter parity and other criteria, the Board judged that the Municipality did not provide adequate opportunity in either of the 2015 and 2016 boundary review processes that it conducted for the public to discuss the appropriate size of the council to serve them. In the first case, the Board determined that advertising placed by the Municipality did not properly explain the scope of discussion that the Municipality is required to entertain. In particular, the Board decision stated that “[t]he advertisement appeared to suggest that only the current size of polling districts would be discussed” when, according to the Board, “discussion should be open and free.”<sup>1</sup> In the second case, the Board determined that, despite its direction “the Municipality did not engage with its residents on the important issue of municipal council size.”<sup>2</sup>

Although the Municipality elected an eight-member Council in October 2016 that will sit until the next municipal election in 2020, the Board directed in its 2016 that a third review be conducted and completed before February 28, 2018. It is unequivocally clear at this point that the Municipality must conduct a process in which the appropriate size of its council will be thoroughly discussed. Given that citizens in the community have advocated for it through both past consultation processes and the subsequent Board hearings, this must include consideration of reducing council size from the current eight members.

### 1.2 PROJECT MANDATE

Having completed many boundary review studies, Stantec staff are very familiar with the specifications of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) as well as 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

<sup>1</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2015 NSUARB 232, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 7.

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. Just as with determining the desired number of polling districts, public consultation is essential to a successful process of setting boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

Our proposal submitted to the Municipality of the District of Clare on November 24, 2017, committed to adhere to these specifications. A Council Size Report was submitted in late January to complete Phase 1. This report is the second and final output reflecting additional research and analysis completed in Phase 2.

Our deadline for submission of the Phase 2 report is February 23, 2018. In order to comply with the NSUARB's 2016 decision, the completed study is to be filed with the Board no later than February 28, 2018, after review by the Municipality. Submission by the end of February will allow the Board to deal with the Municipality's application emerging from this project before the next regular municipal election in October 2020. With the approval of Clare Municipal Council, Stantec's report will be forwarded to the NSUARB, which will rule on the Municipality's application based on criteria established in Provincial legislation and the Board's established guidelines for municipal governance and boundary reviews.

### 1.3 STUDY CONDUCT

Stantec Consulting Ltd. began work on the boundary review shortly after notification of our selection by the Municipality on November 30, 2017. Mapping of existing polling district boundaries and plotting of electors recorded on the Municipality's 2016 enumeration list was prepared prior to the formal commencement of project work on December 6, 2017. On December 6, Stantec's Project Manager met with Clare's CAO for a Project Startup Meeting after which, our Manager conducted interviews with all eight members of Clare District Council. At the request of the Municipality, we also met with representatives of the Clare Civic Association through a group meeting that evening.

In the first phase of the project, Stantec compiled basic information on council size in Nova Scotia, much of which was developed in the course of boundary reviews we have completed over the past six years. We also took advantage of recent research by CBC Radio into compensation of Nova Scotia municipal councillors, which illuminates cost issues that are frequently raised with respect to council size determination.

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<sup>3</sup> NSUARB, "Municipal Boundary User Guide," no date, p. 2, [https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/nsuarb-222634-v1-user\\_guide\\_-\\_mb\\_reviews\\_.pdf](https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca/sites/default/files/nsuarb-222634-v1-user_guide_-_mb_reviews_.pdf)

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We also conducted a survey available to all municipal residents, online and through hard copy distribution by the Municipality, as described **Section 4.0** below. The survey was a critical component of our work as we judged it to be the best available means to gain an understanding of public opinion on council size within the municipal district. We promoted the survey online and worked with the Municipality to maximize its availability to residents. We also encouraged the Civic Association to promote awareness and encourage their members and contacts to participate. Media interest in the boundary review has also been very helpful to increase public awareness and encourage a healthy response.

This report provided the foundation for our presentation to the public concerning council size on January 16, 2018. The public meeting was held in the Clare Veterans Centre in Saulnierville. It was organized as a brief open house with a formal public presentation of Phase 1 research by Stantec. Following the presentation, representatives of interested organizations and citizens made their own presentations after which attendees were invited to ask questions and make comments on the information provided.

Based on this research and public input, Stantec determined the appropriate council sizes to consider in the boundary review phase of the project. In Phase 2, Stantec developed two boundary scenarios that were presented for consideration by the public at a second public meeting held in Saulnierville on February 6, 2018. Stantec again presented information to the public and solicited comments from the public concerning each boundary proposal. Public input guided Stantec's final revisions of the boundary scenarios and shaped the recommendation contained in **Section 5.6.2** below.

Stantec has been assisted throughout this assignment by administrators and staff with the Municipality of the District of Clare. The Municipality's CAO, Stephane Cyr, has supervised the conduct of the review and, with his staff, has provided invaluable support to the conduct of our work and the organization of consultation. We are also appreciative of the input of members of the Civic Association and their efforts to increase public awareness of this project.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND REVIEW

Stantec began the council size research process by reviewing past NSUARB decisions concerning Clare and interviewing local stakeholders. We hoped to learn how the Municipality got to the current review process and the issues that stakeholders felt should be addressed. A full understanding of both matters was critical to effectively mapping out the consultation processes required for the project.

### 2.1 PAST BOUNDARY REVIEWS

Clare conducted boundary reviews heard by the NSUARB in 1992, 2000, 2007, 2015, and 2016. Published decisions are available for the 2000, 2007, 2015, and 2016 applications. The 1992 decision is referred to in the other three. The Municipality's applications in 1992 and 2007 were accepted and approved by the Board. While the NSUARB considered the districts defined for the election of council members in Clare were appropriate in terms of voter parity in the 2015 and 2016 decisions, the Board judged that the Municipality did not provide adequate opportunity for the public to discuss the appropriate size of the council to serve them in either boundary review process it conducted.

#### 2.1.1 1994 Decision

We have been unable obtain a copy of the NSUARB's 1994 boundary decision. The Board's archive of past decisions is incomplete prior to 1998. The 1994 review is referred to in the Board's 2000 decision as well as other recent decisions discussed below. The 2007 decision notes that the 1994 review was "quite dated" at that time. It remains however the last review in Clare in which council size and boundaries were fully vetted with the public.

#### 2.1.2 2000 Decision

The Municipality applied to confirm its eight-member council. It also sought to confirm the district boundaries approved in 1994. No formal public consultation meeting appears to have taken place. The Board decision states that the Board's hearing concerning the application was duly advertised and "invited objectors to advise the Board of their objections in advance of the hearing."<sup>4</sup> It further stated that no objections or letters of support were received. The hearing was conducted by telephone and no members of the public were present during the hearing.

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<sup>4</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2000 NSUARB 102, p. 2.

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At the time, the Board required that polling districts be within  $\pm 25\%$  of the average of all districts. All eight districts in Clare comfortably satisfied this criterion based on the enumeration completed for the October 1997 municipal election. Three districts were outside the  $\pm 10\%$  standard the Board has since adopted. The application was approved, although it is noteworthy that Chair Linda Garber, who wrote the decision, commented that “the average number of electors per polling district is lower than in some rural municipalities.”<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1.3 2007 Review

Clare applied to continue with an eight-member council in 2007. The only change sought by the Municipality was to shift the boundary between Districts 8 and 2 so as to add 24 electors to District 2. A meeting to receive public input on the Municipality's proposal was held on September 21, 2007. According to the Board decision, no members of the public attended the session nor did the Municipality receive any written submissions supporting or objecting to its proposal.<sup>6</sup>

Although four of eight districts fell outside the  $\pm 10\%$  parity criterion, the Board accepted the Municipality's districting. Three of the four districts that fell outside the Board's criterion were reasonably close (11.1%, 11.9%, and 13.9%). The Board noted that District 3 was under the average of all districts by 17.3% but appeared to accept the rationale for this discrepancy.

The boundary shift requested by the Municipality did not actually address the parity criterion. It involved shifting the community of Richfield, in the interior of Clare, to District 2, which was slightly above the average before the change but rose to only 7.1% more than the average with 24 additional voters. District 8, which lost 24 electors, fell from 1.1% short of the average to 3.7% less. The Municipality made the change in response to a request from the community and held a plebiscite in which the affected electors voted 19 to 1 in favour of the change.

The Board approved the application. It noted the lack of objections from the public, its willingness to accept variances up to  $\pm 25\%$  of the average with appropriate justification, and the Municipality's handling of the single proposed boundary change with a plebiscite.

### 2.1.4 2015 Decision

The Municipality of the District of Clare conducted a boundary review in mid to late 2014 to comply with the requirement of Section 369(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* that all Nova Scotia municipalities should “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.”

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<sup>5</sup> Loc cit., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2007 NSUAR 175, p. 2.

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The Municipality engaged a consultant and held public meetings in the communities of Saint Bernard, Saulnierville, and Salmon River on November 24, 26, and 27, 2014, respectively. The meetings attracted one participant in Saint Bernard, eight in Saulnierville, and five in Salmon River, according to the subsequent NSUARB decision, but only ten unique individuals, as four who attended in Saulnierville also went to the Salmon River meeting.<sup>7</sup>

The Clare Civic Association argued before the Board that the consultation process was inadequate. Representatives of the Association testified that advertising placed by the Municipality was inadequate and erroneous. They stated that advertising provided “only a few days notice” before the November meetings<sup>8</sup> and did not mention the size of council could be discussed. They also contended that nine of the ten individuals who attended the public meetings favoured reducing the number of councillors, contrary to the Municipality’s position that “there was a lack of opposition” to maintaining council membership at eight.

The Board agreed with the Association’s position, stating in its decision:

*The advertisement appeared to suggest that only the current size of polling districts would be discussed. For public consultation to be meaningful, any advertisement should clearly state that the public is requested to present their views on the appropriate Council size. Such a discussion should be open and free.*<sup>9</sup>

The Board consequently directed in its decision dated October 7, 2015, that “[Clare] Council ... reconsider the matter and re-submit an application to the Board ... no later than December 4, 2015.”<sup>10</sup>

### 2.1.5 2016 Decision

The review heard by the NSUARB in 2016 was undertaken by the Municipality of the District of Clare in 2015 pursuant to the direction of the Board’s decision in October 2015. The Municipality held public meetings on November 9, 12, and 16, 2015, in the same three communities as it had for the previous boundary review. Attendance was much better for the second round: 41 in Saulnierville, 19 in Salmon River, and 13 in St. Bernard. As before, some individuals attended more than one meeting. The Board’s decision states that 61 different people attended overall.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2015 NSUARB 232, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> According to the NSUARB decision dated October 7, 2015 (pp. 9-10), “the advertisement appeared once in the Clare Shopper published on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>.”

<sup>9</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2015 NSUARB 232, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2015 NSUARB 232, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 5.

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Following the meetings, the Municipality applied again to maintain its Council size at eight members with the same boundary adjustments as were previously proposed. The Clare Civic Association again objected. Association representatives testifying before the NSUARB noted that the Board had intervened in the advertising of the public meetings when a citizen complained that ads placed by the Municipality did not clearly indicate that the size of Council was a subject of the review. They also said that the Municipality only presented alternatives at the meetings involving eight councillors (one retaining the then current boundaries and the another with revised boundaries) and did not give citizens the opportunity to present alternatives.

Again, the Board agreed with the Civic Association. The NSUARB determined that, despite the direction of the 2015 Board decision, “the Municipality did not engage with its residents on the important issue of municipal council size.”<sup>12</sup> The Board also rejected the Municipality’s position that there was a “low level of public participation in the consultative process”<sup>13</sup> noting that 61 individuals compared reasonably well with participation in similar municipal governance consultations that it had overseen. While it acknowledged that there was not a “clear consensus” concerning the appropriate council size for Clare “that was not a sufficient basis to simply default to the current council size.”<sup>14</sup>

Faced with an impending municipal election in October 2016, the NSUARB determined that further attempts to force an effective review of council size could cause confusion among voters in Clare. The Board consequently decided to approve the Municipality’s application as submitted on conditions suggested by the Civic Association. The Board accepted that the polling district boundaries proposed by the Municipality for eight councillors were reasonable, noting that the two districts that fell outside the  $\pm 10\%$  criterion for voter parity were only marginally outside the standard (District 6 at 12.7% and District 8 at -10.4%).<sup>15</sup> A council of eight was elected from these districts in 2016 and will serve Clare until 2020.

As suggested by the Civic Association the Board, however, required the Municipality to conduct a third boundary review on the following terms:

*... conduct a proper study regarding the fairness and reasonableness of the number of councillors and polling districts, and district boundaries, consistent with the requirements in ss. 368 and 369 of the [Municipal Government] Act. The study is to be filed with the Board no later than February 28, 2018. This will allow for this matter to be dealt with by the Board before the next regular municipal election in October 2020.*<sup>16</sup>

The current study is being undertaken to comply with this requirement.

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<sup>12</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Re: Municipality of the District of Clare, 2016 NSUARB 37, p. 10.

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## 2.2 INTERVIEWING

In our proposal, Stantec committed to interview all members of Clare District Council at the outset of our work on the project. At the request of the Municipality, we also met with members of the Clare Civic Association in keeping with direction from the NSUARB that the Association be given formal standing in the current boundary review process. In both cases, we were interested to poll opinions concerning the most appropriate size for Clare's municipal council. With the Councillors, we also explored their concerns with current boundaries and potential boundary changes that might be considered to address voter parity and community of interest criteria.

### 2.2.1 Councillor Interviews

Stantec met for a brief interview with each of the eight Council members on December 6, 2017. We asked each Council member for the number of councillors they considered most appropriate for Clare and explored issues with current district boundaries.

Most Councillors would prefer to maintain the current Council of eight. Several indicated that they had discussed the issue among themselves and the majority favoured staying with their current membership. They argued that the Municipality is working well. Its financial position is good and they feel Council members collaborate positively. They also noted that compensation for individual councillors is modest at about \$19,000 per councillor, with a few suggesting that honorariums would probably be increased if council size was reduced.

A minority of Councillors suggested six council members as an alternative. Even these individuals said that Clare Council has worked well together and acknowledged that fewer members would not save a significant amount of money. They largely appeared to be offering an alternative that they would accept if the public clearly wants a smaller council. Even councillors who favour the status quo, expressed a willingness to accept a reduction of their numbers if the public clearly wants it.

The strongest argument put forward by Councillors favouring the current Council membership, in our opinion, concerned the dynamics of council voting. They noted that a council of five such as the Civic Association has suggested, would require only three members to win any vote. If one or two councillors could not attend a meeting for work or personal reasons but the required quorum of three was present, only two votes would constitute a majority. Some noted that while a smaller council might be able to complete business more quickly with fewer voices at the table, it was not beneficial to reduce debate. More members, they contend, bring more perspectives and ensure that potential decisions are properly analyzed and discussed.

Councillors were flexible concerning their own boundaries. Stantec plotted electors within each district enumerated for the 2016 municipal election before meeting with council members. We established that four of the eight existing districts are presently outside the Utility and Review Board's  $\pm 10\%$  criterion. Councillors acknowledged the need to adjust to the standard and pointed out several locations where current boundaries that cause confusion for voters could be adjusted to achieve a more balanced distribution. Stantec also pointed out some additional locations where we saw opportunities to shift

voters, and Councillors took these into consideration, indicating acceptance of some possibilities and providing reasons to avoid others. These potential adjustments will be taken into account in developing boundary scenarios in Phase 2 of the project.

Discussion of boundaries also revealed that District 2 has a largely English-speaking population while the remaining seven districts on the coast are predominantly Francophone. The consensus appeared to support the continued recognition of District 2 as a distinct community of interest. Boundary adjustments should consider the dominant language in areas subtracted from or added to the district.

## 2.2.2 Clare Civic Association

The April 4, 2016, decision of the NSUARB, following the second boundary review process conducted by the Municipality, directed that the Clare Civic Association “be kept apprised of the progress of the study and consultation process throughout.” Clare’s CAO requested, in this light, that Stantec meet with Association representatives the same day as we interviewed the municipal councillors. A meeting was arranged through Gerard Theriault, the Association’s President. Stantec’s Project Manager met with eight members of the Association on the evening of December 6 after completing the round of interviews with municipal councillors described in the preceding subsection.

The Association has established a position in favour of council size reduction through its participation in the last two boundary review processes. Association members stated that they consider a council with five members to be suitable for Clare. Members also support a change from a Warden to a Mayor and would like to see consideration of election of council members on an at-large basis. Stantec’s Project Manager noted during the meeting that neither change can be considered as part of the current process because of restrictions in place under the *Municipal Government Act*.

Members present said that council size reduction recognizes the decline of population in the District of Clare as well as changes in technology. They noted that Clare has had eight councillors dating back to the incorporation of the Municipality in 1879. According to members who researched the matter, the Municipality, at that time, was divided into nine parishes, of which one (Hectanooga) was very small and was consolidated with another parish, making eight to be represented on the municipal council. Members noted that a great deal has changed in terms of transportation and communications technology since that time and it should be possible to run the municipality with fewer representatives today.

In support of their position, members noted the neighbouring District of Digby has operated successfully with a five-member council for several years. The District of Barrington and the County of Richmond also have five-member councils that appear to be effective. They suggested that the direct savings in the compensation of three eliminated councillors could be directed to increasing the salary of the Warden (or, if their preference could be implemented, the Mayor) to make it a full-time position. Other conversation indicated that members feel too many candidates are acclaimed in Clare, which is one reason for wanting to consider at-large election; part-time councillors are not fully engaged in municipal work; and debate in Council is minimal.

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Association members expressed broad concerns with the Municipality's management of consultation in relation to land use planning and other matters as well as the boundary review. They reiterated criticisms that they made to the NSUARB at hearings related to the Municipality's two previous boundary applications and expressed concerns that the current process, which must be completed by February 23, 2018, would be too compressed and overlaps with the lobster season, which preoccupies many residents of Clare.

Stantec's Project Manager expressed the opinion that a short timeframe would have benefits in terms of creating and maintaining public awareness. He noted that rapid turnaround keeps issues fresher and allows the public to hold the Municipality and its consultant to account more effectively, as lengthy interludes in our experience allow rumors to circulate and memories to fade. He also noted that there would be one centralized meeting for each of the two phases of the current project as opposed to one round with three distributed meetings used as with the two preceding reviews. He stated that this was put forward in Stantec's proposal and, in his opinion, would be more effective to ensure good attendance and meaningful dialogue among residents from different areas of Clare. Members of the association appeared to accept both points.

Both Stantec and members agreed that weather in January would be a concern but would have to be dealt with if it inhibited consultation. Stantec's representative admitted his lack of knowledge of the impact of lobster season on consultation. It will be our intention to promote participation in all consultation processes in collaboration with the Municipality. We noted that municipal staff had expressed a commitment to the same objective. We encouraged the Association members present to take part and to encourage other supporters of their views to respond to the council size survey and come out to planned meetings.

## 3.0 COUNCIL SIZE ASSESSMENT

No hard and fast rules to dictate the appropriate size of a municipal council. It is generally accepted that council size should reflect population levels. Arguments are also made, and normally conceded, that the land area of a municipality should be taken into consideration. More constituents and area to be served increase the burden on municipal representatives and justify more council members. Some also argue they increase required compensation.

### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHY IN CLARE

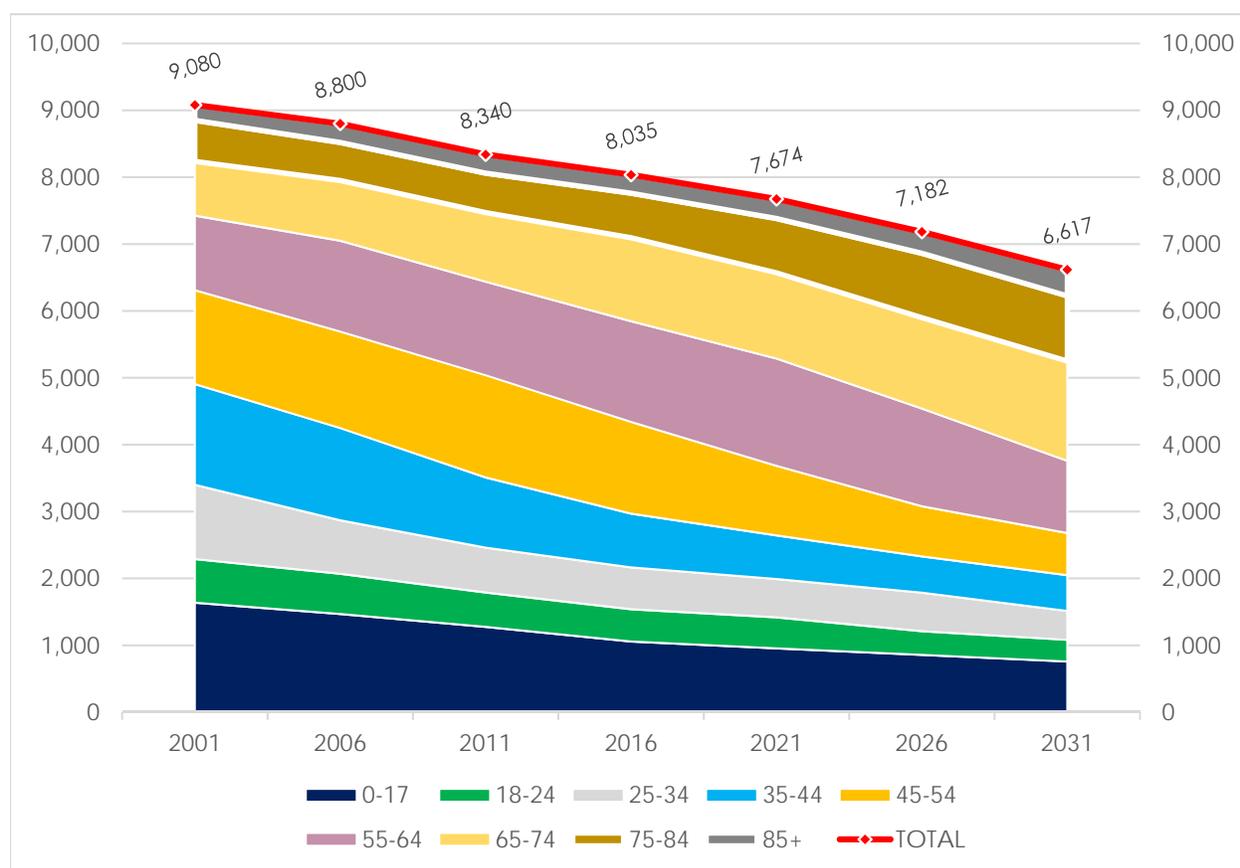
Clare is among the smaller rural municipalities in Nova Scotia ranking 14<sup>th</sup> by population among the 21 listed in **Table 3-1**, below. Like most rural municipalities in Nova Scotia, Clare has been losing population. From 2001 to the last Census of Canada in 2016, the population in the Municipal District fell by 1,045 (-11.5%).

Stantec projected the population of Clare to 2031 (i.e., well beyond the next required council size and boundary review) using a comprehensive demographic model that calculates the municipality's future population in the context of similar projections for Canada and Nova Scotia (**Figure 3-1**). The numbers presented in the table are based on Statistics Canada estimates as opposed to Census counts. We prefer estimates to census numbers because they are adjusted for census undercount, which is typically estimated at about 3%, although it varies from place to place. Statistics Canada produces annual estimates for Canada, the provinces and territories, and census divisions, which in Nova Scotia are counties such as Digby County, of which Clare is a component.

The model projects continued population decline. Clare has lost substantial numbers of young people through preceding censuses. The decrease of 1,185 people in the 25 to 44-year age groups from 2001 to 2016 is reflected in declining numbers of children in the population over the same period. The population from late teen years to the mid-forties forms families and raises children. Declining numbers in these age groups erodes the ability of the population to reproduce. With fewer children resident in the municipality, the next generation reaching their reproductive years will be smaller, further reducing expected natural increase.

Given the municipal age structure, population in Clare can be expected to continue to fall. By our calculation, the municipality will lose 1,418 residents by 2031. The population, furthermore, will continue to age, with senior citizens increasing in numbers even as the total population declines. The voting age population in Clare will consequently fall less than the municipality's total population. Our estimates suggest that by 2031, nevertheless, there will be 1,119 fewer electors than in 2016 (-16.0%).

Figure 3-1 Population by Age Group, Municipality of the District of Clare, 2001-2031



Age Group	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
0-17	1,636	1,469	1,276	1,057	956	857	758
18-24	654	601	514	483	463	355	324
25-34	1,110	800	670	625	572	575	431
35-44	1,505	1,380	1,050	805	652	544	535
45-54	1,405	1,440	1,530	1,370	1,040	750	630
55-64	1,115	1,360	1,395	1,505	1,606	1,460	1,079
65-74	810	900	1,035	1,250	1,282	1,358	1,491
75-84	615	570	590	665	812	964	976
85+	230	280	280	275	291	321	392
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,080</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>8,340</b>	<b>8,035</b>	<b>7,674</b>	<b>7,182</b>	<b>6,617</b>
<b>% Change</b>		-3.1%	-5.2%	-3.7%	-4.5%	-6.4%	-7.9%
0-17	1,636	1,469	1,276	1,057	956	857	758
18+	7,444	7,331	7,064	6,978	6,718	6,326	5,859
% 18+	82.0%	83.3%	84.7%	86.8%	87.5%	88.1%	88.5%

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd. (2001 to 2016 numbers are Stantec estimates based on Statistics Canada estimates for Digby County)

## 3.2 COUNCIL SIZE

Most assessments of council size include benchmarking of comparable jurisdictions. For several previous studies, we have benchmarked Nova Scotia council sizes against the populations and land areas of the municipalities they serve. Nova Scotia categorizes its municipalities as regional municipalities (Halifax, Cape Breton, and Queens), rural municipalities, and towns. The governance of towns differs significantly from rural municipalities like the Municipality of the District of Clare as the areas to be served are much smaller, the services to be provided are more varied and intensive, and councils are typical, although not invariably, elected at large rather than by ward or district. Two of Nova Scotia's three regional municipalities (Halifax and Cape Breton) are much larger than Clare and include large urban concentrations that have no parallel in Clare. The focus of the comparison following is therefore on rural municipalities, which like Clare, generally encompass small communities and dispersed rural lands, as well as limited areas requiring water and wastewater networks, and similar services normally associated with dense urban areas.

### 3.2.1 Nova Scotia Council Size

Among rural and regional municipalities in Nova Scotia, council sizes and the number of constituents per councillor varies considerably. The largest council in Nova Scotia serves Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Following the recent reduction of its membership, Halifax Regional Council has 17 members including the Mayor. Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), which reduced the size of its Regional Council immediately before HRM, has 13 members including its Mayor. Both, however, are the largest municipalities in the province with the majority of their population is concentrated in dense central urban areas. Among rural municipalities like the District of Clare, the largest council is in Cumberland, which has 13 members (**Table 3-1**).

Several councils have changed the number of council member in recent years. Some municipalities that have taken in dissolving towns have increased the size of their councils. Prior to its absorption of the Towns of Springhill and Parrsboro, Cumberland had a ten-member County Council. With a population of 15,312, County Councillors, on average, served 1,531 constituents and a land area of 422.4 square kilometers. With the addition of three council members, Cumberland councillors now represent 1,400 people on average and a land area of 353.0 square kilometres. Hants West increased its council membership by one following its absorption of the Town of Hantsport.

Other municipalities have reduced their council size. Pictou, which previously had the largest council among rural municipalities in the province, reduced the number of council members from 14 to 12; East Hants decreased members from 13 to 11; Kings went from 11 to 9, while adding a Mayor; Lunenburg, which had a Mayor already, dropped one councillor to reach 10; and Richmond was cut from 10 to 5 by the NSUARB after a contentious governance review process.

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Table 3-1 Council Members by Population and Land Area, Rural Municipalities, Nova Scotia, 2016

Rural Municipality	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population	Mayor	Councillors	Total	Pop./Rep	Rank	km <sup>2</sup> /District	Rank
Annapolis	3,177.50	18,252	No	11	11	1,659	8	288.9	6
Antigonish	1,452.70	14,584	No	10	10	1,458	11	145.3	17
Argyle	1,528.00	7,899	No	9	9	878	17	169.8	14
Barrington	631.9	6,646	No	5	5	1,329	15	126.4	18
Chester	1,122.20	10,310	No	7	7	1,473	10	160.3	16
<b>Clare</b>	<b>852.8</b>	<b>8,018</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>106.6</b>	<b>20</b>
Colchester	3,572.70	36,091	Yes	11	12	3,008	2	324.8	5
Cumberland	4,246.00	18,197	No	13	13	1,400	14	326.6	4
Digby	1,659.30	7,107	No	5	5	1,421	12	331.9	3
East Hants	1,798.60	22,453	No	11	11	2,041	5	163.5	15
Guysborough	2,116.80	4,670	No	8	8	584	20	264.6	8
Inverness	3,822.30	13,190	No	6	6	2,198	4	637.1	1
Kings	2,095.60	47,404	Yes	9	10	4,740	1	232.8	12
Lunenburg	1,766.90	24,863	Yes	10	11	2,260	3	176.7	13
Pictou	2,798.40	20,692	No	12	12	1,724	6	233.2	11
Richmond	1,244.20	8,458	No	5	5	1,692	7	248.8	10
Shelburne	1,818.50	4,288	No	7	7	613	19	259.8	9
St. Mary's	1,909.60	2,233	No	7	7	319	21	272.8	7
Victoria	2,870.80	6,552	No	8	8	819	18	358.9	2
West Hants	1,241.90	15,368	No	10	10	1,537	9	124.2	19
Yarmouth	586.1	9,845	No	7	7	1,406	13	83.7	21
<b>ALL</b>	<b>42,312.80</b>	<b>307,120</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1,600</b>		<b>222.7</b>	

Source: 2016 Census of Canada (area and population data) and Stantec compilation

Clare, as noted, has had eight councillors for many years. Ten of 21 rural municipalities have larger councils. On a per capita basis, the average Clare councillor serves 1,002 constituents, which ranks 16<sup>th</sup>. By land area, they average 106.6 square kilometres of territory within each district, which is 20<sup>th</sup>.

### 3.2.2 Council Cost

Cost has frequently been raised as a concern in governance and boundary reviews we have conducted and was raised as an issue by the Clare Civic Association. Costs can be compared to other rural municipalities using data published by the Province in Nova Scotia Municipal Statistics. The publication annually summarizes revenues and expenditures by all municipalities across the province. Council costs are a component of expenditures for “General Government,” also includes expenditures for municipal administration, including the CAO and municipal clerk. As data in **Table 3-2** documents, the costs incurred for municipal governance in Clare are relatively low. In 2016, the Municipality recorded \$1,231,984 in expenditure for General Government from an overall municipal budget of \$6,294,103. The percentage of all municipal expenditures (19.6%) ranks 14<sup>th</sup> among the 21 rural municipalities. On a per capita basis, Clare residents pay \$153.65 for the administration of their municipal government, which ranks 18<sup>th</sup> or the fourth least among Nova Scotia’s rural residents.

Table 3-2 General Government Expenditures, Rural Municipalities, Nova Scotia, 2016

Rural Municipality	TOTAL Expenditures	General Government	General Government % of TOTAL	Rank	General Government/ Capita	Rank
Annapolis	\$10,385,752	\$3,829,291	36.9%	2	\$209.80	12
Antigonish	\$10,230,832	\$2,246,176	22.0%	10	\$154.02	17
Argyle	\$7,005,655	\$1,414,009	20.2%	12	\$179.01	15
Barrington	\$6,244,476	\$1,513,857	24.2%	6	\$227.78	9
Chester	\$14,523,782	\$3,242,949	22.3%	9	\$314.54	6
<b>Clare</b>	<b>\$6,294,103</b>	<b>\$1,231,984</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$153.65</b>	<b>18</b>
Colchester	\$36,538,097	\$5,238,735	14.3%	18	\$145.15	20
Cumberland	\$14,617,018	\$4,994,774	34.2%	4	\$274.48	7
Digby	\$6,450,513	\$1,513,714	23.5%	7	\$212.99	11
East Hants	\$22,871,483	\$5,135,555	22.5%	8	\$228.72	8
Guysborough	\$21,669,390	\$3,494,371	16.1%	17	\$748.26	1
Inverness	\$26,629,220	\$2,683,920	10.1%	20	\$203.48	13
Kings	\$74,678,000	\$5,019,900	6.7%	21	\$105.90	21
Lunenburg	\$21,972,503	\$4,149,229	18.9%	16	\$166.88	16
Pictou	\$15,843,527	\$3,161,228	20.0%	13	\$152.78	19
Richmond	\$18,450,722	\$3,741,969	20.3%	11	\$442.42	2
Shelburne	\$5,150,286	\$1,795,382	34.9%	3	\$418.70	3
St. Mary's	\$2,743,387	\$907,654	33.1%	5	\$406.47	4
Victoria	\$19,648,983	\$2,408,475	12.3%	19	\$367.59	5
West Hants	\$5,857,528	\$3,423,390	58.4%	1	\$222.76	10
Yarmouth	\$9,617,332	\$1,855,148	19.3%	15	\$188.44	14
<b>ALL</b>	<b>\$357,422,589</b>	<b>\$63,001,710</b>	<b>17.6%</b>		<b>\$205.14</b>	

Source: 2016 Census of Canada (area and population data) and Stantec compilation

The more direct concern for this study, though, is compensation of council members. Staff with CBC Radio recently compiled data on the compensation of Nova Scotia councils that was released to complement a series of reports on small Nova Scotia municipalities that was broadcast while Stantec conducted the council size phase of this study. Council salary numbers, which were not previously available in a consistent format for all municipalities, provide insight to issues that are frequently raised by proponents of both council size increases and decreases.

Data in **Table 3-3** taken from the CBC compilation covers the rural counties and districts in Nova Scotia. CBC compiled salaries for mayors and wardens, and their deputies as well as by district councillors. Clare has a relatively high level of salary compensation per constituent within the group. District Council members including the Warden and Deputy Warden average \$20.90 per constituent per year or 55.0% more than the average for Nova Scotia's rural municipalities. The salaries for each position, on the other hand are relatively low, respectively ranking 18<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> among mayors and wardens, their

deputies, and remaining council members across the 21 rural municipalities. Overall, the average council member salary in Clare ranks 17<sup>th</sup>.

Table 3-3 Council Salaries, Rural Municipalities, Nova Scotia, 2016

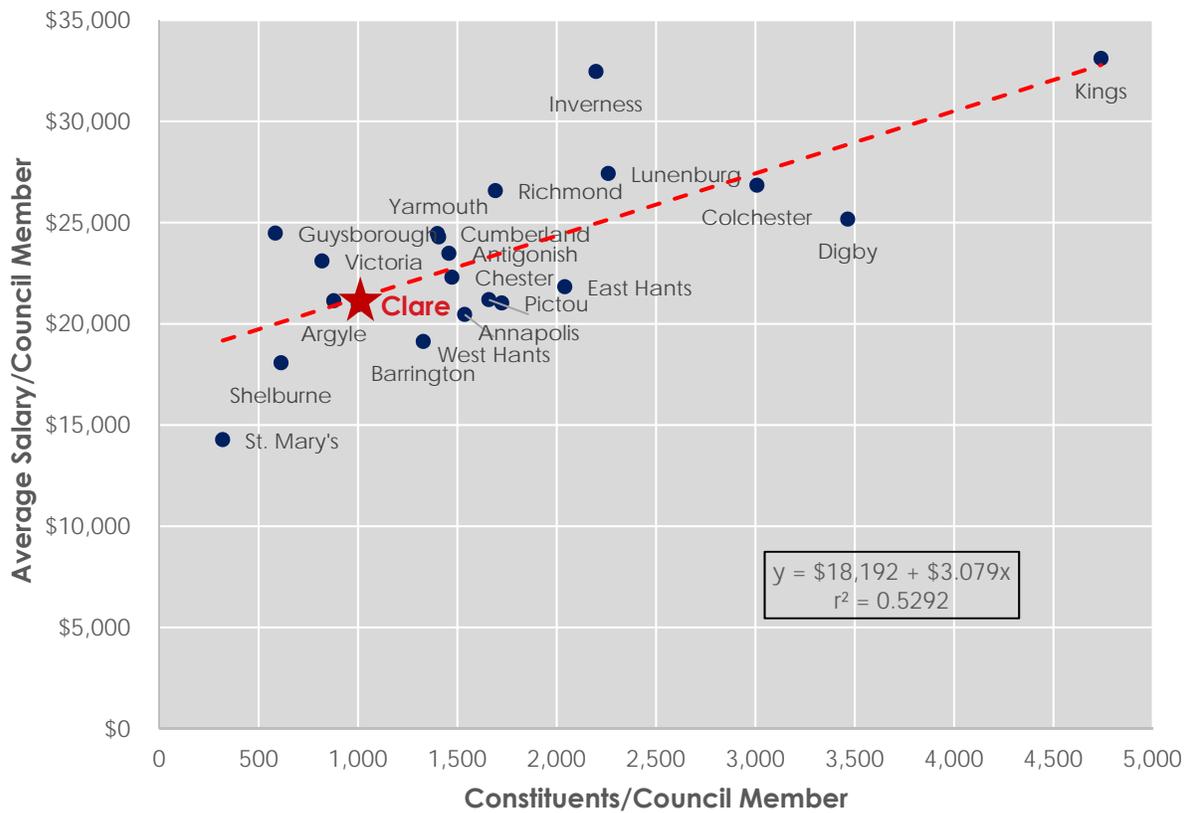
Municipality	Council Size	Population	Pop./Members	Total Annual Salaries	Salaries/Pop.	Mayor/Warden Salary	Deputy Salary	Councilor Salaries	Salary/Member
Annapolis	11	18,252	1,659	\$233,024	\$12.77	\$37,890	\$24,629	\$18,945	\$21,184
Antigonish	10	14,584	1,458	\$234,718	\$16.09	\$39,986	\$24,820	\$21,239	\$23,472
Argyle	9	7,899	878	\$190,215	\$24.08	\$31,764	\$21,706	\$19,535	\$21,135
Barrington	5	6,646	1,329	\$95,602	\$14.38	\$22,784	\$19,457	\$17,787	\$19,120
Chester	7	10,310	1,473	\$156,091	\$15.14	\$39,868	\$21,623	\$18,920	\$22,299
<b>Clare</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8,018</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>\$167,567</b>	<b>\$20.90</b>	<b>\$30,067</b>	<b>\$22,042</b>	<b>\$19,243</b>	<b>\$20,946</b>
Colchester	12	36,091	3,008	\$322,071	\$8.92	\$47,774	\$29,907	\$24,439	\$26,839
Cumberland	13	18,197	1,400	\$317,880	\$17.47	\$39,035	\$25,350	\$23,045	\$24,452
Digby	5	17,323	3,465	\$125,820	\$7.26	\$33,085	\$26,525	\$22,070	\$25,164
East Hants	11	22,453	2,041	\$240,020	\$10.69	\$38,157	\$24,617	\$19,694	\$21,820
Guysborough	8	4,670	584	\$195,778	\$41.92	\$39,286	\$25,536	\$21,826	\$24,472
Inverness	6	13,190	2,198	\$194,749	\$14.76	\$44,802	\$33,199	\$29,187	\$32,458
Kings	10	47,404	4,740	\$331,000	\$6.98	\$49,300	\$36,100	\$30,700	\$33,100
Lunenburg	11	24,863	2,260	\$301,613	\$12.13	\$46,968	\$32,876	\$24,641	\$27,419
Pictou	12	20,692	1,724	\$252,282	\$12.19	\$48,511	\$23,561	\$18,021	\$21,024
Richmond	5	8,458	1,692	\$132,850	\$15.71	\$40,667	\$27,110	\$21,691	\$26,570
Shelburne	7	4,288	613	\$126,457	\$29.49	\$25,255	\$19,437	\$16,353	\$18,065
St. Mary's	7	2,233	319	\$99,867	\$44.72	\$20,136	\$17,916	\$12,363	\$14,267
Victoria	8	6,552	819	\$184,800	\$28.21	\$37,730	\$22,330	\$20,790	\$23,100
West Hants	10	15,368	1,537	\$204,591	\$13.31	\$39,480	\$21,535	\$17,947	\$20,459
Yarmouth	7	9,845	1,406	\$169,996	\$17.27	\$36,420	\$25,176	\$21,680	\$24,285
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>8.7</b>				<b>\$13.48</b>	<b>\$37,570</b>	<b>\$25,022</b>	<b>\$21,161</b>	<b>\$23,500</b>

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd.

Proponents of smaller councils often cite cost reduction as a benefit of the change they favour. Opponents often respond, however, that increases in responsibility associated with the increased constituents to be served by councillors following reduction will simply result in salary increases to council members as did several councillors who we interviewed as described in **Subsection 2.2.1** above.

The data compiled by CBC offers an opportunity to test this claim by examining the correlation between council salary bills and the average number of constituents per member shown in **Figure 3-2**. A scan of the scatter diagram in the figure suggests a clear relationship between salary compensation and constituents served. Kings County, which is the largest rural municipality and has recently reduced its council membership so that its council members serve significantly more residents than any other group of rural councillors, sits in the upper right hand corner of the graph. St. Mary's, which has the smallest population is in the lower left. In between, notwithstanding a few significant outliers such as Inverness County, there is a clear upward trend: as the number of constituents served grows, salaries tend to rise.

Figure 3-2 Correlation between Council Salaries and Constituents Served, Nova Scotia Rural Municipalities, 2016



Source: CBC Radio (data) correlation by Stantec Consulting Ltd.

The relationship is illustrated by the red trend line in the graph, which rises upward from left to right. The linear regression relationship it portrays, furthermore, is expressed in the formula in the lower right hand quadrant of the graph:  $y = \$18,192 + \$3.079x$ . In words, the equation suggests that from a base of \$18,192 corresponding to the point at which the trend line crosses the vertical or y-axis (called the y-intercept) where 0 constituents are served, the average annual salaries of council members (including the Mayor or Warden and their Deputy) increase by an average of \$3.08 per unit increase in the number of constituents. The value of the correlation coefficient  $r^2$  shown beneath the equation, furthermore, indicates that 0.5292 or 52.9% of the variance in average council salary per constituent can be explained by the number of constituents per council member. For Clare, interestingly, substituting the number of constituents per council member (1,002) into the equation yields  $\$21,277^{17} \pm \$1,710$ . The actual average of salaries currently paid to Clare Councillors (\$20,946) lies within this range (from \$19,567 to \$22,987), suggesting their compensation is comfortably within the norm for the province's rural municipalities.

<sup>17</sup>  $y = \$18,192 + \$3.079(1,002) = \$21,277$

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The equation, furthermore, can be employed to estimate the likely savings from reduced council membership, recognizing that there is variance associated with any such estimate. Each member in a council of five serving Clare, for example, would have 1,604 constituents. If their salaries were adjusted as predicted by the model, they would receive  $\$18,192 + \$3.079 (1,604)$  or  $\$23,130$ . The salary bill would be diminished from  $\$167,567$  to  $\$115,647$  or by  $\$51,920$ , which is roughly equal to the current salaries of 2.5 councillors rather than the full salaries of three councillors.

## 4.0 COUNCIL SIZE CONSULTATION

As the NSUARB's prescriptions concerning municipal boundary reviews make clear, the Board considers public consultation critical to the process (see **Section 1.2** above). To assess the opinions of Clare residents concerning Council Size in Phase 1 of the project, Stantec conducted an online survey available to all residents and a public meeting at which we presented the results of the survey as well as the research described above.

### 4.1 ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was a critical component of our investigation of the most appropriate council size for the Municipality of the District of Clare. Stantec has conducted several previous council size surveys for similar projects and found them a useful means to obtain the opinions of residents, particularly residents who cannot attend public meetings or feel they do not have the time to attend. Our success with their conduct has steadily increased as we have gained knowledge of the technique. **Appendix A** contains a summary of survey results.

Online surveys have become increasingly popular over the past decade as Internet access has expanded and tools have been developed to implement surveys. A notable challenge of online surveys is to attract respondents. Unlike mail-out and telephone survey methods in which respondents are directly contacted and asked to respond to a questionnaire, an online survey is only present to Internet users who encounter it on the web.

Initially for our boundary review work, we only used the online approach as a supplement to telephone surveys as we could not count on receiving an adequate number of responses to interpret the result. A link posted on the web sites of a municipal client might attract 50 or 60 respondents. Over time, we have made increasing use of secondary publicity to increase awareness. Direct emailing to potential respondents, notification at public events, and inclusion of URLs in print and poster advertising can all enhance awareness. Most importantly, recent improvements in our understanding of social media and, particularly, Facebook advertising have given us a new and particularly effective device. Facebook advertising can be tightly targeted to specific geographic areas such as Clare and transmission of information across individual Facebook networks can greatly increase the reach of advertising.

The online survey was not expected to obtain a statistically accurate quantification of public opinion. Access to the survey was open to all members of the public. A link was posted on the Municipality of the District of Clare web site as the initial indication that the survey was available. Stantec also created a Facebook page and paid for pop-up advertising targeted to Clare residents using Facebook. Stantec also encouraged Municipal staff, Council members, and members of the Clare Civic Association to inform their contacts of the survey as noted above. The Municipality also informed the Clare Chamber of Commerce and emailed its contacts to promote further participation.

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In addition, the Municipality made printed copies of the survey available in the Municipal Building in Little Brook and the municipal library in Meteghan. Visitors to either location filled out the survey onsite and deposited them in collection boxes within each building. The hard copy questionnaire was provided to allow residents who did not have access to the Internet to participate in the survey. It was limited to two locations at which respondents were required to complete the questionnaire to prevent abuse by individuals who might easily have filled out multiple responses to influence survey results.

Respondents drawn to the survey by these promotional strategies were self-selected. They had sufficient interest in governance in Clare to follow the link to the survey and respond to its questions. Unlike a random sample – which could be obtained through a telephone survey administered to randomly dialed numbers or an online survey to which respondents are invited by phone or email as well as a variety of other methods -- the response to our survey cannot be considered a representative sample of Clare's population. The benefit of the survey in the manner it was conducted was to add greatly to the range of individuals expressing their opinion as well as obtaining opinions in a manner that could be easily quantified.

#### 4.1.1 Survey Response

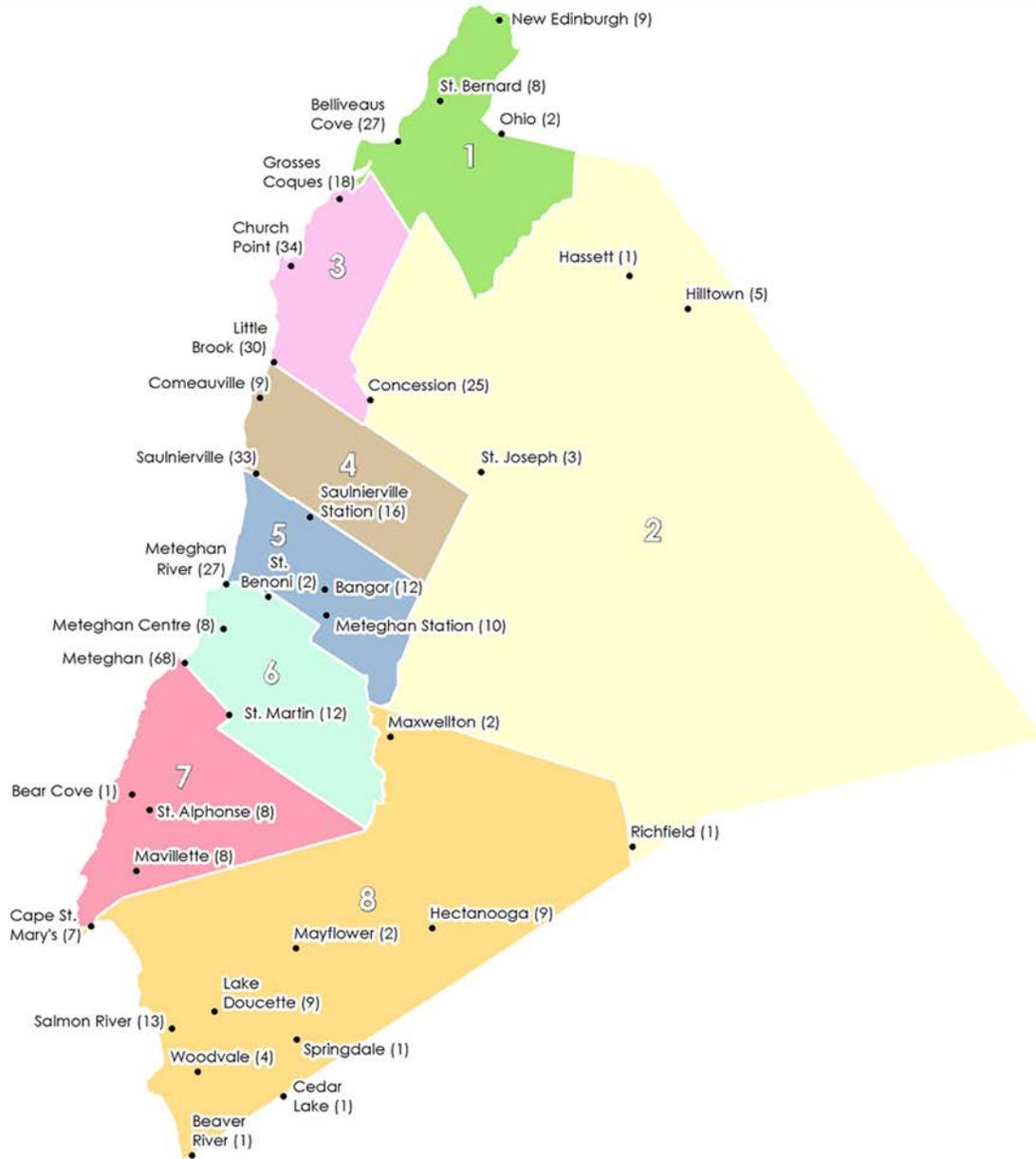
The survey was posted on Tuesday, December 19, 2017. It was closed at midnight on Sunday, January 14, 2018. The survey obtained 540 responses: 508 online and 32 deposited in the collection boxes in the Municipal Building and the Meteghan Library. We consider the response very positive. It is among the largest responses that we have received to any online survey that we have posted. It is especially impressive given the relatively small population in Clare. The total of 512 responses from within Clare accounts for 7.1% of the 2016 Census population of Clare 15 years of age or older.

While we feel our online survey promotion was very successful, we were helped considerably by a CBC Radio report on municipal issues in Nova Scotia that made direct reference to the boundary review in Clare and the survey. The survey was mentioned in the first episode of the three-part series, which was heard on January 3, 2017. We received 56 responses that day after several days in which interest in the survey was clearly waning. The URL for the survey was also incorporated in the advertising for the January 16, 2018, public meeting, and that also appeared to increase responses albeit to less effect than the CBC report. An article in the Yarmouth Vanguard and advertising placed by the Municipality in the Clare Shopper also produced notable increases in responses in their immediate aftermath.

Unsurprisingly, survey respondents were generally past participants in local municipal elections. Only 13.8% of 414 respondents who indicated their past voting involvement did not vote in any of the past three elections held in Clare. More than 80% of the same group voted in each of the elections of 2008 (81.2%), 2012 (83.6%), and 2016 (87.2%). The majority of respondents (52.4%), in fact, voted in all three elections. The result reinforces the expectation that respondents would be self-selected individuals with a stronger than normal interest in municipal politics.

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Figure 4-1 Respondents by Community, Clare Council Size Survey (Question 6), 2018



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

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Respondents were well distributed within the municipal district. Four hundred and twenty-four indicated the community in which they lived in response to Question 6 of the survey. These respondents identified 34 different communities within Clare with numbers distributed as shown in **Figure 4-1**. While the distribution of respondents across municipal district lines is uncertain, our rough allocation dividing Little Brook, Saulnierville, Meteghan River, and Meteghan evenly between the districts they straddle gave from 48 to 57 respondents from each district except for Districts 2 (36 respondents) and 3 (67 respondents).

Respondents also reflected a wide range of age groups. The 429 respondents who provided their age or age group covered every cohort from 15 to more than 85 years of age. Relative to the population of Clare as recorded by the 2016 Census of Canada, the distribution of responses indicates that the youngest and oldest age cohorts were under-represented in the survey, although the degree of under-representation older adolescents and young adults is moderate. The only group that appears to have been excluded to a significant degree is seniors over 85 years. The online medium likely influenced their ability to respond but other issues probably also played a part and would not, in our opinion, have been eliminated by alternative technologies.

Table 4-1 Age Profiles, 2016 Census and Council Size Survey (Question 7), 2018

Age Group	2016 Census		Council Size Survey		Percentage Point Difference
	Number	% Share	No.	% Share	
15-17 years			7	1.6%	-2.7
18-19 years	395	5.5%	5	1.2%	-2.7
20-24 years	325	4.5%	10	2.3%	-2.2
25-34 years	625	8.7%	34	7.9%	-0.8
35-44 years	805	11.2%	56	13.1%	1.9
45-54 years	1,365	18.9%	86	20.0%	1.1
55-64 years	1,510	21.0%	122	28.4%	7.4
65-74 years	1,250	17.3%	77	17.9%	0.6
75-84 years	660	9.2%	28	6.5%	-2.7
85 years +	270	3.7%	4	0.9%	-2.8
<b>TOTAL (Population 15+)</b>	<b>7,205</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

We were concerned with individuals creating multiple responses to the survey and thereby distorting its results. Notwithstanding this concern, we permitted more than one response from an IP address (i.e., the numerical label that uniquely identifies electronic devices that can connect to the Internet), given that many individuals share a computer with others in a household or at a community facility like a library. Survey Monkey identifies the IP address from which each survey is submitted (but not the owner/user or any other identifying information).

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Stantec sorted the survey response database by IP address and compared all responses that came from the same device. We could not identify any responses that appeared to be duplicates from the same source. While we cannot be certain that individuals may have submitted more than one response either by adequately disguising their responses from the same device or by responding from multiple devices, we are comfortable that there were no obvious examples of either.

#### 4.1.2 Survey Results

Given that the sample collected was self-selected, as explained at the close of **Section 4.1** above, the survey results should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of Clare's population as a whole. Citizens who did not respond to the survey because they were not aware of it or were not sufficiently interested to take the time to fill it out, may feel differently. The same, of course, may be said of citizens who do not attend public sessions. Responses are best considered as the opinions of a large number of citizens from within the Municipal District.

The survey posed two opinion questions. The first dealt with respondent expectations from a smaller or a larger council. It had four parts relating to the importance citizens in Clare place on four different reasons that are often cited in favour of smaller councils. The second opinion question was the focus of the survey and this phase of the boundary review process: how many members should serve on Clare's District Council. Stantec has used both questions with very similar wording in previous council size surveys we have conducted.

#### Council Size Expectations

Question 3 investigated the differences respondents thought a larger or a smaller council size could make. Commonly, in our experience, proponents of council size reduction anticipate a more efficient and collaborative council that will cost less. Supporters of maintaining or increasing council size often counter that more councillors can provide better service. Both tend to believe that the council change they prefer will result in a better performing or more effective municipal government and will often contradict the beliefs of the other side. Most notably, supporters of a larger council usually contend that the savings will not be significant. We asked whether respondents would expect a larger or smaller council to encourage better interaction among councillors, save money, make government more effective, or improve the delivery of municipal services.

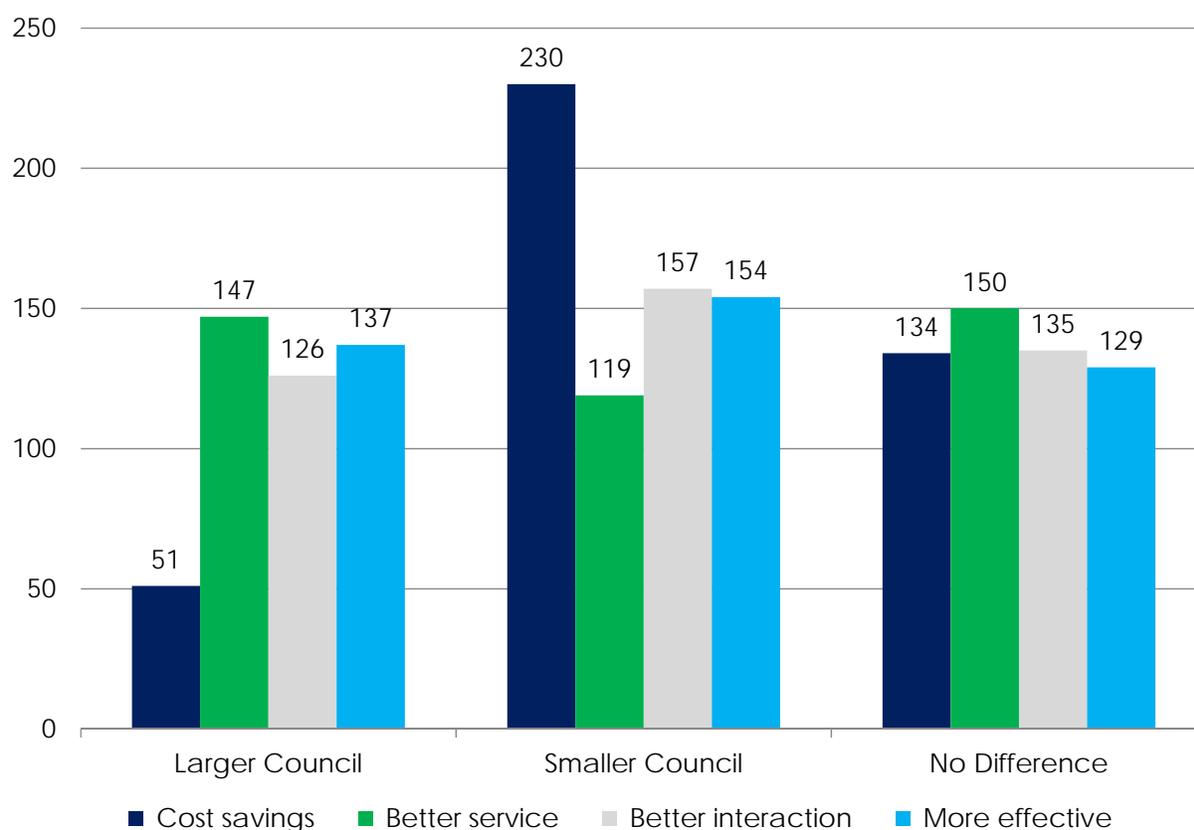
The distributions of answers to the four questions, as shown in Figure 4-2 indicate:

- Moderately more respondents (36.7% v. 32.6%) feel that a larger council will be more effective than a smaller council
- A similar small plurality (37.6% v. 30.1%) think council members will interact better in a smaller council
- Citizens feel more council members would give better service by a larger margin (35.3% v. 28.6%)
- The largest difference (55.4% v. 12.3%) concerned cost savings, which the majority feel a smaller council could achieve.

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For each feature, roughly a third of respondents feel that the size of council will make no difference.

Figure 4-2 Expectations of Council Size Alternatives, Clare Council Size Survey (Question 3), 2018



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

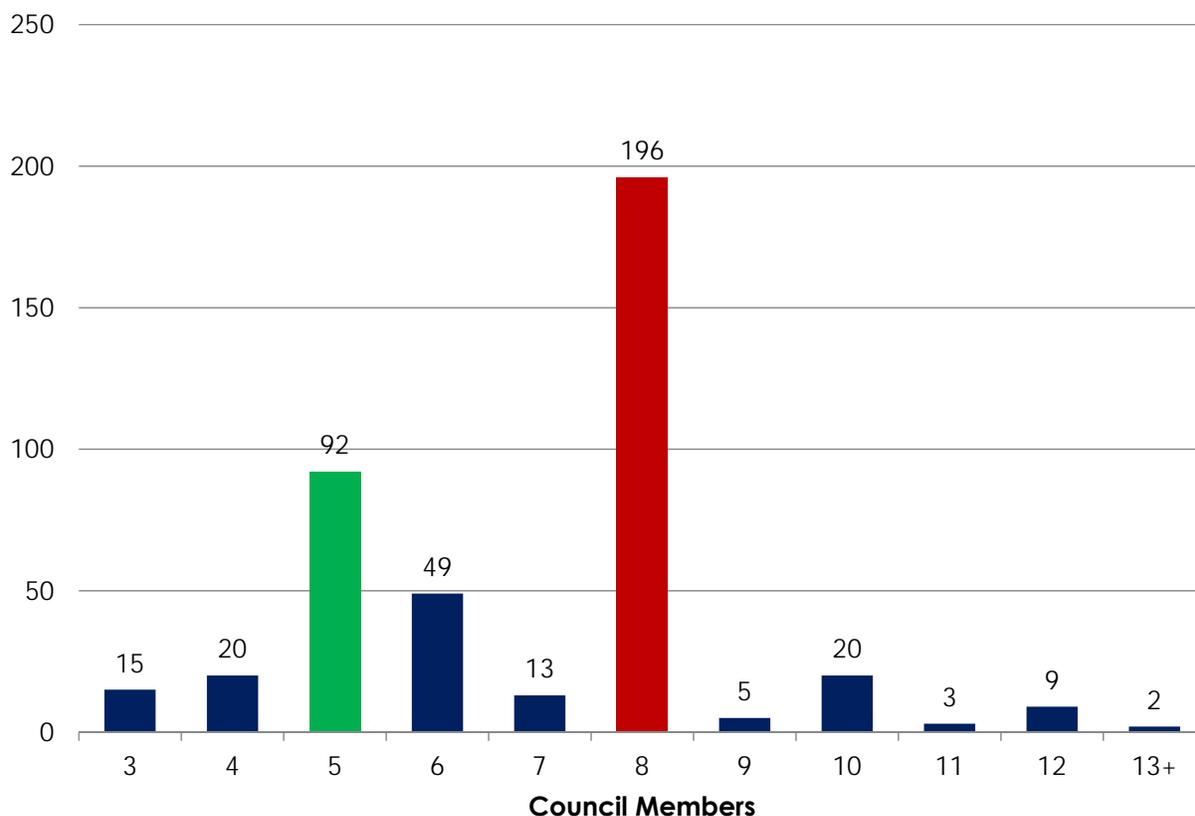
### Council Size Preferences

The critical question in our survey asked respondents to "Please indicate the number of Council members you would prefer to have on Clare District Council (the minimum Council size is three members)." The most frequent response, from 196 of 424 people (46.9%) who answered the question, was eight, the current number of councillors (**Figure 4-3**). Another 39 respondents (9.2%) indicated they would prefer Clare District Council to have more members (9 to 13 or more).

The most popular alternative was five council members, which drew 92 responses (21.7%). Among all respondents to the question, 44.6% would like the number of councillors to be reduced. The majority (55.4%) would prefer Council remain at its current size or be enlarged.

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Figure 4-3 Preferred Council Size, Clare Council Size Survey (Question 4), 2018



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

## 4.2 COUNCIL SIZE PUBLIC MEETING

Following the completion of the online survey, which closed at midnight on January 14, 2018, the Municipality of the District of Clare and Stantec collaborated to host a public meeting on Tuesday, January 16 to review council size research and survey results. The meeting was held in the Clare Veterans Centre in Saulnierville at 7:00 pm. It was open to all members of the public.

### 4.2.1 Meeting Process

The doors of the Veterans Centre were open to the public before 7:00 pm. In anticipation that some citizens would arrive early and some time would be required for attendees to settle into their seats, Stantec’s Project Manager and municipal staff set the room up with a sign in sheet and three panels on easels that provided an overview of the research on council size completed by Stantec. Stantec’s Project Manager also collected the names of individuals interested in making presentations to the group so that they could be ordered after his presentation. Citizens arriving in the centre were encouraged to sign in and to review the panels before taking their seats.

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The formal meeting began at roughly 7:15 pm when Clare CAO Stephane Cyr introduced John Heseltine, Stantec's Project Manager, to the audience. Mr. Heseltine then took approximately 30 minutes to provide a summary of the highlights of research presented above in this report with a PowerPoint that included tables and charts largely as contained in this document.

After his presentation was complete, Mr. Heseltine invited former Councillor and Warden Jean Melanson to present to the group as Mr. Melanson had requested to do so. He was followed by Dr. Kenneth Deveau, a vice-president at Université Sainte-Anne, who recently served as a commissioner on the Commission on Effective Electoral Representation of Acadian and African Nova Scotians and co-authored the Commission report *Representation: Toward More Effective Representation for Acadian and African Nova Scotians*<sup>18</sup>; Michel Comeau, a citizen with a strong interest in community development; and Evelyn Leblanc-Joyce, who spoke as a representative of the Société acadienne de Clare.

Following these presentations, the floor was opened to all participants. Several more attendees rose to make similar but less formal presentations to the group. They included Andre LeBlanc, a citizen; Paul Gaudet, a former municipal Councillor; Gerard Theriault, President of the Clare Civic Association; and Christianne Chandler, a member of the Clare Civic Association. Their input was followed by a general exchange of questions and answers between Mr. Heseltine and citizens attending.

Following the question and answer session, Mr. Heseltine outlined the next steps in the process. He reinforced that the process was proceeding in two phases as prescribed by NSUARB guidelines. He noted that the results of Phase 1 research, including the input of citizens through the consultation meeting, would be the basis for determining what council size or sizes would be developed into boundary scenarios required for the second phase. He stated that a Phase 2 public meeting would take place within two to three weeks to present boundary options and encouraged all present to attend.

He added that following the Phase 2 public meeting, he would prepare a final report by February 23, 2018, recommending a council size and boundaries to be employed for the 2020 municipal election in Clare. He noted that the report would be for the consideration of Clare Council, which could adopt it as the basis for its application to the NSUARB, which was required to be submitted by February 28, 2018. He acknowledged that Council also had the option to adopt a modified version of his recommendation or develop an alternative recommendation if its members saw fit.

#### 4.2.2 Meeting Attendance

The meeting was attended by 60 to 70 people in addition to the consultant and representatives from the Municipality (**Figure 4-4**). No current member of Clare Council attended because of a collective decision of the Councillors that they should not influence the discussion. Reporters from the Digby Courier and Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse were also present and filed stories after the meeting.

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<sup>18</sup> The Commission on Effective Electoral Representation of Acadian and African Nova Scotians, *Representation: Toward More Effective Representation for Acadian and African Nova Scotians*, no date.

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The meeting was largely conducted in English, at least partially, because Mr. Heseltine is a unilingual Anglophone. Speakers were welcome to present or ask questions in French and several did so. Some expressed disappointment that French was not the primary language of discussion. No restriction was placed on either language. Bilingual municipal staff took notes and were available throughout to assist with questions and translation, although this was not necessary. Mr. Heseltine was provided with translations of French-language input after the meeting.

### 4.2.3 Meeting input

All four formal speakers who followed Stantec's presentation supported the current council size in Clare. Former Warden Melanson, who stated that he served more than 30 years on Council, praised the operation of the Municipality. He noted that the Municipality has pursued many positive initiatives over the years and has maintained a significantly lower tax rate than neighbouring rural municipalities in Southwest Nova Scotia. He also alluded to Stantec's assessment of council costs as evidence that reducing the size of council would not save a significant amount of money for the Municipality.

Dr. Deveau noted that, while he is an employee of Université Sainte-Anne, he was speaking on his own behalf as a member of the Clare community. He set out seven principles that he felt should be taken in account in considering council size and polling district boundaries: 1. Effective Representation, 2. Protection of Minorities, 3. Bilingualism, 4. Diverse Representation, 5. The Role of Councillors, 6. Efficiency, and 7. An Informed decision. He emphasized that the objective was to improve governance and council size was probably not the critical concern. He suggested that district boundary scenarios should consider more than one council size option.

M. Comeau thanked the Clare Civic Association for pressing the council size issue and, thereby, stimulating the outstanding response to the council size survey. He added, however, that he did not agree with the Association's desire to reduce the size of council. He believes Clare has been successful in preserving the French language within Nova Scotia and developing local economic opportunities. The declining population of the area, he added, is a challenge common to most of rural Canada. He does not see the need to change the community's successful model.

Mlle. LeBlanc-Joyce, who is a secondary school student, reinforced many of M. Comeau's views. She said that Clare is a unique community with special challenges, particularly the challenge of preserving the French language and Acadian culture in a predominantly Anglophone province and world. She feels that reducing the number of council members would increase the burden they must carry and reduce their ability to serve the members of the community and protect their special culture.

Andre LeBlanc, who led off the questions and answer phase after Mlle. LeBlanc-Joyce was finished, expressed his opinion that Clare Council has performed very well and continues to be effective. He urged a focus on improving the local economy. Former Councillor Paul Gaudet, who followed next, stated the number of councillors is not the main issue, it is their ability to represent the people and provide municipal services efficiently. He too considers there is no need to change.

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Figure 4-4 Council Size Public Meeting, Tuesday, January 16, 2018



Source: Municipality of the District of Clare

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Two commentators from the Civic Association spoke from the opposite perspective. M. Theriault responded to a remark that the association could muster only six members to meet with Mr. Heseltine early in the project as described in **Subsection 2.2.2** above. He noted that the meeting with Mr. Heseltine was an informal information exchange and the Association has brought more members to other events. Ms. Chandler noted that the size of council, in her opinion, would not change bilingual representation. She agreed that Clare residents had much of which to be proud and a promising future ahead of them. The current process is about how best to move forward and a good example of the importance of engaging the public.

Questions from the audience dealt with a variety of issues including concerns with frequent acclamations in municipal elections and the possibility of electing councillors at large rather than from districts. Mr. Heseltine noted that the *Municipal Government Act* does not permit rural municipalities to elect councillors at large. Councillors must be elected on a district basis. He added, as well, that the current process does not allow for the change from a Warden to Mayor, which the legislation permits under certain circumstances. He further elaborated that the scope of the current boundary review process is limited to the number of members who would serve on Clare Municipal Council and the boundaries of the districts from which they would be elected. Other municipal government issues such as engagement of the public or reinforcement of linguistic identities could only be dealt with to the extent that they might be influenced by these two factors.

## 5.0 BOUNDARY REVIEW

Stantec developed boundary scenarios based on research and public input concerning council size in the first phase of the Boundary Review. We presented two options outlined below at a second public meeting on February 6, 2018. Based on comments received at that meeting, we revised the scenarios and arrived at our final recommendation presented in **Section 5.6.2** below.

### 5.1 BOUNDARY CRITERIA

As noted above, the number of councillors in a Nova Scotia rural municipality dictates the number of districts from which they are to be elected and, therefore, sets the challenge of boundary definition. The NSUARB has distinct specifications for defining polling districts. Under Section 368(4) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the Board must consider the number of electors, relative parity of voting power, population density, community of interest, and geographic size when determining the number and boundaries of polling districts.

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, traditionally 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 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.

The most common reason 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, religious, economic, or geographic groups. Districts do not, however, normally represent a specific community of interest. They usually contain several, but it is 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 may have to be divided to maintain voter parity. As Figure 5 2, illustrates, several of Clare’s largest communities (e.g., Little Brook, Saulnierville, and Meteghan) have been divided by district boundaries for district parity.

The NSUARB is also mindful of population density and geographic size within 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 often accepted lower populations in such districts recognizing that meeting the parity standard would require coverage of an excessive land area.

While not referenced among NSUARB criteria, districts are generally contiguous; that is, their territory is continuous and uninterrupted. There are exceptions, such as District 2 in Guysborough, which combines the well-separated African-Nova Scotian communities of Lincolnville and Sunnyvale, but the unusual arrangement is justified by the objective of representing the African-Nova Scotian community of interest within the Municipal District of Guysborough. We are not aware of another similar example among municipal districts in the province.

In addition, while it is also not directly expressed in the legislation, we consider it beneficial for 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.

Finally, it is desirable to have readily identifiable boundaries and to 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 very visible. Limited access roadways like Highway 101 in Clare work as more or less absolute barriers as few properties face each other across the right-of-way and direct interaction is limited to lands adjacent to interchanges. Rivers, lakes, inlets, and other watercourses also serve well as they often separate communities, especially where there are no crossing links (e.g., bridges across water features, which are equivalent to interchanges on highways).

On the other hand, communities most certainly form on opposite sides of roadways to which access is not limited as well as around interchanges and harbours, and on opposing sides of rivers. In the absence of dividing physical features that limit communication between communities, 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.

## 5.2 CURRENT BOUNDARIES

The NSUARB approved the current polling district boundaries for Clare (**Figure 5-1**) in its 2016 decision concerning Clare's council size and boundary application. The polling district boundaries presented in the Municipality's application relied on evidence submitted in the Board's 2015 decision. **Table 5-1** presents the area of each current district with the number of electors in each according to the 2012 and 2016 municipal enumerations. The names accompanying each district number identify a prominent community in each district as an assist to the reader. They have no official importance. District 2 is identified as East Clare given the larger number of communities within it.

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The average area of each district is 114.3 km<sup>2</sup>. The areas of the polling districts include water surfaces and therefore do not compare directly to the area for the whole of Clare Municipal District shown in **Table 3-1**, above. Clare has the second smallest polling districts on average among Nova Scotia's 21 rural municipalities. Districts 2 and 8 are, however, notably larger with District 2 more than four times the average. District 2, nevertheless, is significantly smaller than the average district in Inverness County and only moderately larger than the averages in Victoria, Digby, Cumberland, and Colchester (see **Table 3-1**, above).

The Municipality drew the number of electors shown for each district in the first column under 2015 from its enumeration for the 2012 municipal election. Although two of Clare's eight districts, denoted in **yellow/gold bold** type in **Table 5-1**, fell marginally outside the NSUAR's voter parity criterion, the Board accepted them for the 2016 municipal election in Clare.

Using the new enumeration for the 2016 election, we updated this data for **Table 5-1**. The enumeration list provided to Stantec by the Municipality contained 6,857 electors. We removed all electors designated on the enumeration list as 'Deceased', 'Duplicate', 'Moved Out of Municipality', 'Moved Out of Province', 'Moved to an Unknown Address', 'Out of districts', and 'Returned Mail Out of districts', which subtracted 68. We plotted the 6,789 valid electors and were able to locate 6,730 on mapping of Clare.

Notwithstanding the deductions and the 59 electors we could not plot, the new enumeration increased the total number of electors by 165 from 2012 and the average in each district rose by 20 from 821 to 841.

Table 5-1 Electors by Polling District, District of Clare, 2015 and 2016

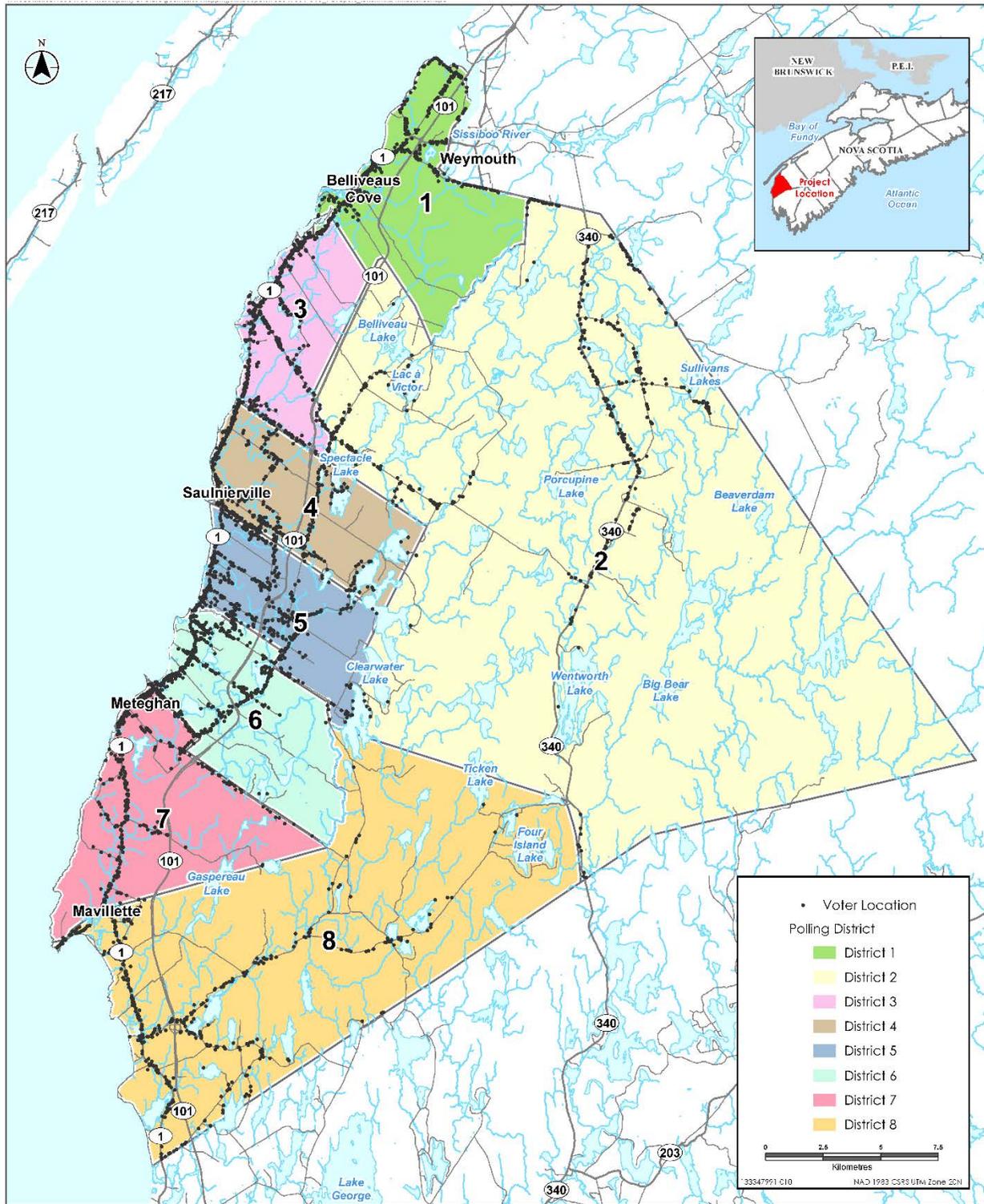
Polling District	2015 Boundary Review				2016 Enumeration		
	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation
1 Belliveaus Cove	51.2	744	-77	-9.34%	737	-104	<b>-12.39%</b>
2 East Clare	459.0	780	-41	-4.95%	776	-65	-7.76%
3 Church Point	34.0	805	-16	-1.90%	837	-4	-0.51%
4 Saulnierville	41.3	847	26	3.21%	910	69	8.17%
5 Lower Saulnierville	36.1	892	71	8.70%	946	105	<b>12.45%</b>
6 Meteghan	46.4	925	104	<b>12.72%</b>	990	149	<b>17.68%</b>
7 St. Alphonse	58.0	837	16	2.00%	788	-53	-6.33%
8 Salmon River	188.0	735	-86	<b>-10.43%</b>	746	-95	<b>-11.32%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>914.1</b>	<b>6,565</b>			<b>6,730</b>		
<b>Averages</b>	<b>114.3</b>	<b>821</b>			<b>841</b>		

Source: Municipality of the District of Clare

The distribution of electors also changed. Whereas two districts were moderately outside the NSUAR's  $\pm 10\%$  parity criterion based on 2012 numbers, four districts are now beyond the standard. District 8 has increased its deviation from the average from -10.43% to -11.32%, which is still only moderately beyond -10%. Both District 1 and District 5 have moved from within the desired range to -12.39% and 12.45% respectively. District 6, which was previously 12.72% above the average is now 17.68% above the average, a deviation sufficiently substantial that we have denoted it with **bold red** type in the table. Although three districts are only moderate outliers, these discrepancies were a key consideration in our adjustment of boundaries of Clare's polling district boundaries presented in **Section 5.4** below.

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Figure 5-1 Polling Districts, District of Clare, 2016



Source: Municipality of the District of Clare and Government of Nova Scotia

### 5.3 SCENARIO CREATION

The primary source of information on the distribution of electors or individuals eligible to vote in any Nova Scotia municipality is the enumeration list. Enumeration lists are prepared for each municipal election. They provide the civic address of each eligible voter or elector in the municipality with which we can plot the distribution of individual electors. With an accurate plotting of voter locations, we can compile the number of electors in any geographic area we may wish to define within the municipality.

The Municipality of the District of Clare provided Stantec with the enumeration list compiled for the 2016 municipal election. We normally expect a significant effort to reconcile addresses with the Provincial Civic Address File that we use to plot electors. In the case of Clare, we were surprised that 99.3% of addresses on the enumeration list plotted without any modification on our part.<sup>19</sup> As a result, we have been able to avoid procedures to reconcile plotted numbers with known voter counts for districts that we typically apply. The superior enumeration records make the counting of electors after boundary adjustments more accurate than for many other studies we have completed.

Boundary adjustments normally involve shifting areas from districts with a surplus of electors to districts that are deficient. Districts with a surplus are defined as those with 10% more electors than the average among all districts within the municipality. Deficient districts have 10% fewer electors than the average. For Clare, we have defined areas that may be transferred using Nova Scotia place names mapping, which divides the province comprehensively into named communities to complement the Civic Address File. **Figure 5-2** shows place names and boundaries for communities within Clare as well as 2016 enumerated electors within each community.

Stantec further subdivided the community polygons where current boundaries divide them into more than one district (e.g., Meteghan Station, which is divided among Districts 2, 5, and 6, became three polygons corresponding to each district area). We then shifted the polygons as necessary to meet the NSUARB's voter parity criterion as closely as possible.

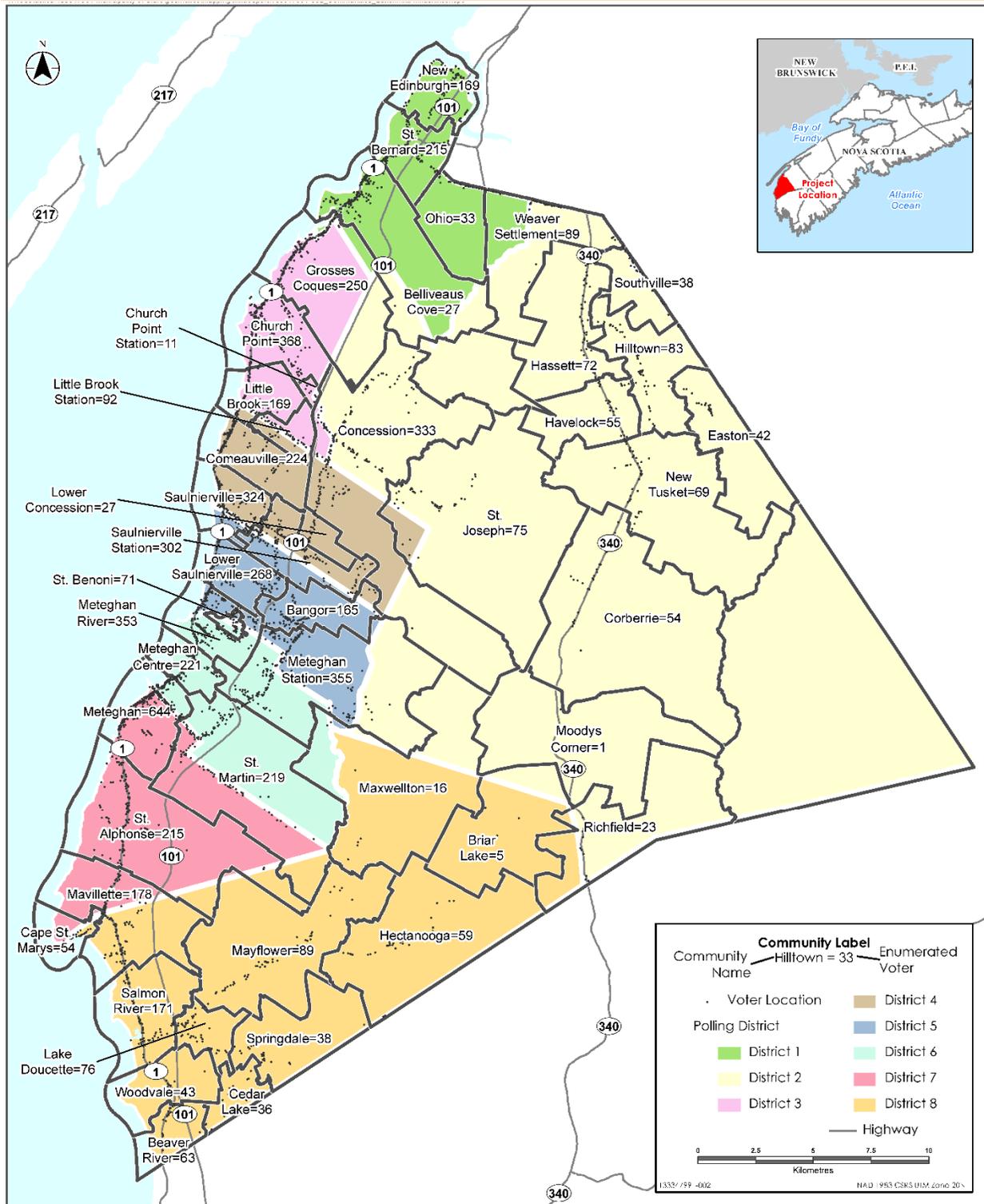
Using identified communities helped us to protect communities of interest. At the same time, it helped us to reconnect communities divided by the current district framework. A good example, of the latter issue is Cape St. Mary's where a few electors have been included in District 7, whereas the balance of their neighbours on Cape St. Mary's Road are in District 8. We discussed this potential shift with the affected councillors in the course of our interviewing in Phase 1 and confirmed it was as reasonable to them. A similar situation noticed later was the peninsula between Eel and Beaver Lakes, which is currently in District 4, although it can only be accessed from District 5. It has been consolidated with the abutting district in all polling district scenarios presented below. We also attempted to consolidate larger communities that are now separated by district boundaries, such as Meteghan, which straddles the boundary between Districts 6 and 7.

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<sup>19</sup> Typical modifications are corrections of street names used in enumeration lists to correspond to the exact names used in the Civic Address File. Similar reconciliation of address numbers is also necessary in some instances.

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Figure 5-2 Communities and Polling Districts, District of Clare, 2016



Source: Municipality of the District of Clare and Government of Nova Scotia

## 5.4 BOUNDARY SCENARIOS

Although, the public preference for the status quo was clearly conveyed, we developed boundary scenarios for five and eight-member councils to ensure full consideration of the options. Dr. Deveau, who made a detailed presentation at the public meeting, urged that we examine “the impact of more than one electoral map,” which he noted the nearby District of Argyle did for their most recent boundary review. Stantec has also developed boundary options for more than one council size for many past boundary review exercises.

We considered it advisable to assess the challenges and potential benefits of a five-district framework as well as eight-districts to ensure all views were taken into account. Five members was selected as the alternative choice because it was advocated by the Clare Civic Association and because it was the second most preferred response to Question 4 in our online survey (see **Figure 4-3**, above). Given the difficulties that Clare has encountered in satisfying the NSUARB through its past two boundary review processes, we consider our foremost concern is to ensure that all options are fully considered.

### 5.4.1 Proposed Eight-district Scenario

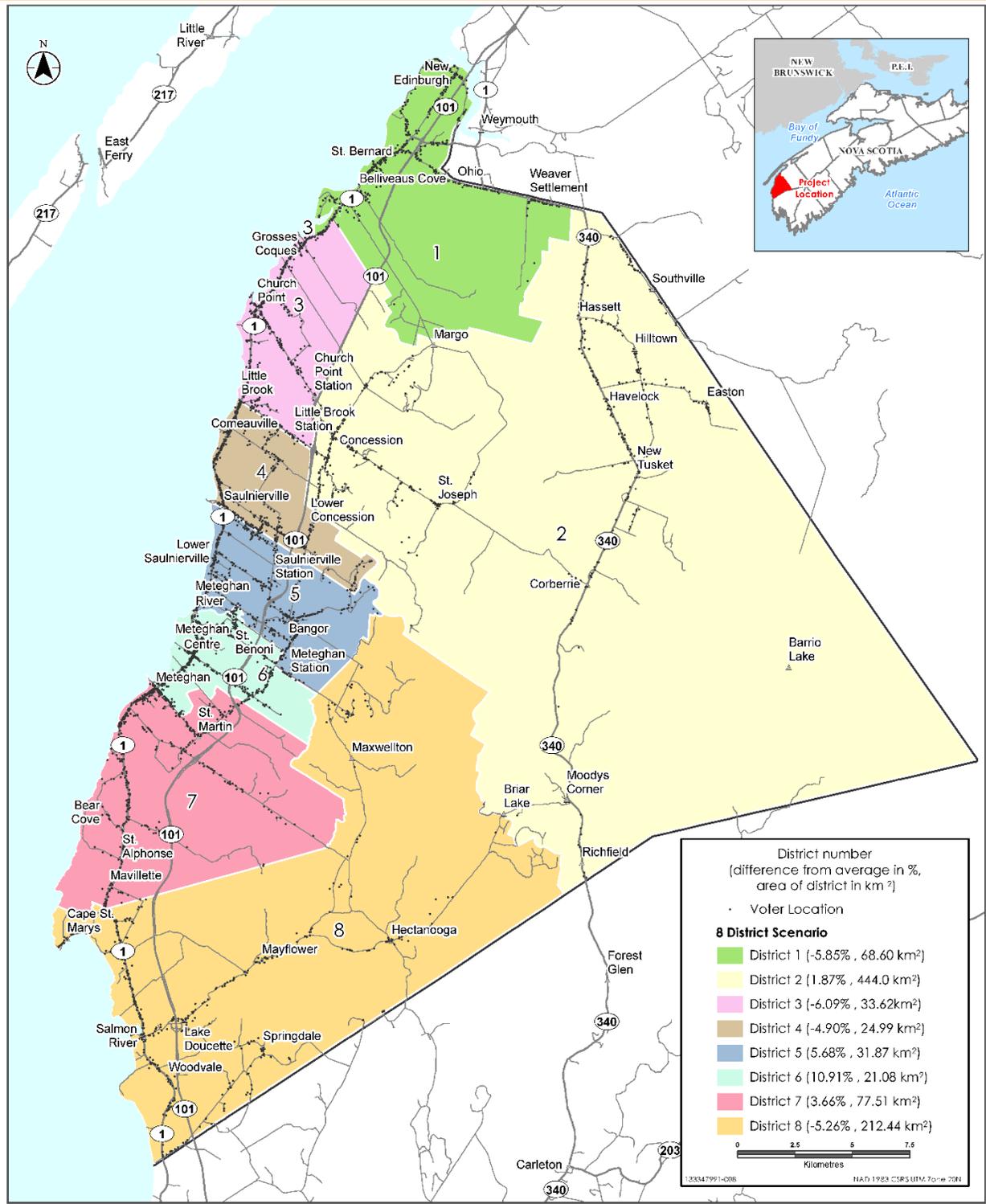
We took a conservative approach to the eight-district scenario, focusing on adjusting boundaries between Clare’s existing polling districts sufficiently to satisfy the NSUARB voter parity criterion and dealing some minor anomalies in the existing boundary framework.

Given that the average number of electors per district in Clare is 841, all districts must be within 84 electors of the average. To meet this standard, the scenario prepared by Stantec involved the following adjustments:

- **District 1** was **12.39%** or 104 voters short of the average. To increase numbers within the district we adjusted the district boundary to take in parts of Belliveaus Cove and Weaver Settlement now in District 2 and brought the number of electors to 5.85% from the average.
- **District 2** was 7.76% or 65 electors below the average. Areas shifted to District 2, however, subtracted 66 electors and a portion of Meteghan Station transferred to District 8 took another nine. To compensate for these losses, we added areas from the communities Concession and St. Joseph that are in current District 3 and 4 to District 2. The 98 additional voters brought District 2 within 5.02% of the average. The area of the district remains the largest the eight in the municipality but its land area was reduced from 459.0 km<sup>2</sup> to 431.1 km<sup>2</sup>.
- **District 3** was just four voters (0.51%) short of the average. Transferring lands in Concession to District 2 subtracted 47 electors from District 3 taking it to -6.09% from the average.
- **District 4** was 8.17% above the average. The transfer of areas of Concession and St. Joseph to District 2 and Bangor to District 5 reduced the number of electors in the district by 110; however, it stayed within the parity guideline at 4.90% below the average.

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Figure 5-3 Eight-district Boundary Scenario, District of Clare



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

- **District 5** was **12.45%** (105 voters) above the average. Because the small peninsula between Ell Lake and Beaver Lake that is now in District 4 can only be accessed from District 5, we transferred it to District 5 adding another 12 electors and taking the deviation from the average up to 13.91%. To bring the number of electors in line with the parity criterion, we transferred the portion of St. Benoni in the district as well as a small area of Maxwellton to abutting districts. The loss of 40 electors in the two areas was sufficient to reduce the number of electors in the district to 5.68% above the average.
- **District 6** presented the most significant challenge to meet the parity criterion, as it was **17.68%** above the average number of electors per district. Although we added 38 electors from St. Benoni in District 5, 94 were subtracted by taking away the areas of St. Martin and Maxwellton within District 6. The net loss of 56 electors brings the deviation from the average down to **10.91%**, which is within six electors of the 10% guideline.
- **District 7** was 6.33% under the average. We transferred the area of Cape St. Mary's within the district, which has six electors, to District 8 from which the lands must be accessed. This small loss was more than balanced by adding 90 electors in the community of St. Martin to the district. The additional electors bring District 7 to 3.66% more than the average.
- **District 8** was **11.32%** below the average. The addition of areas of Maxwellton in Districts 5 and 6, and the portion of Cape St. Mary's in District 7 were sufficient to bring the district within the parity guideline at 5.26% below the average.

The transfer of the peninsula in Bangor and the isolated Cape St. Mary's electors now in District 7 are map corrections. In both cases, the transferred areas can only be reached from within the districts to which they have now been joined. Remaining changes, in addition to addressing parity concerns, largely consolidate communities recognized by Nova Scotia Civic Address File.

#### 5.4.2 Proposed Five-district Scenario

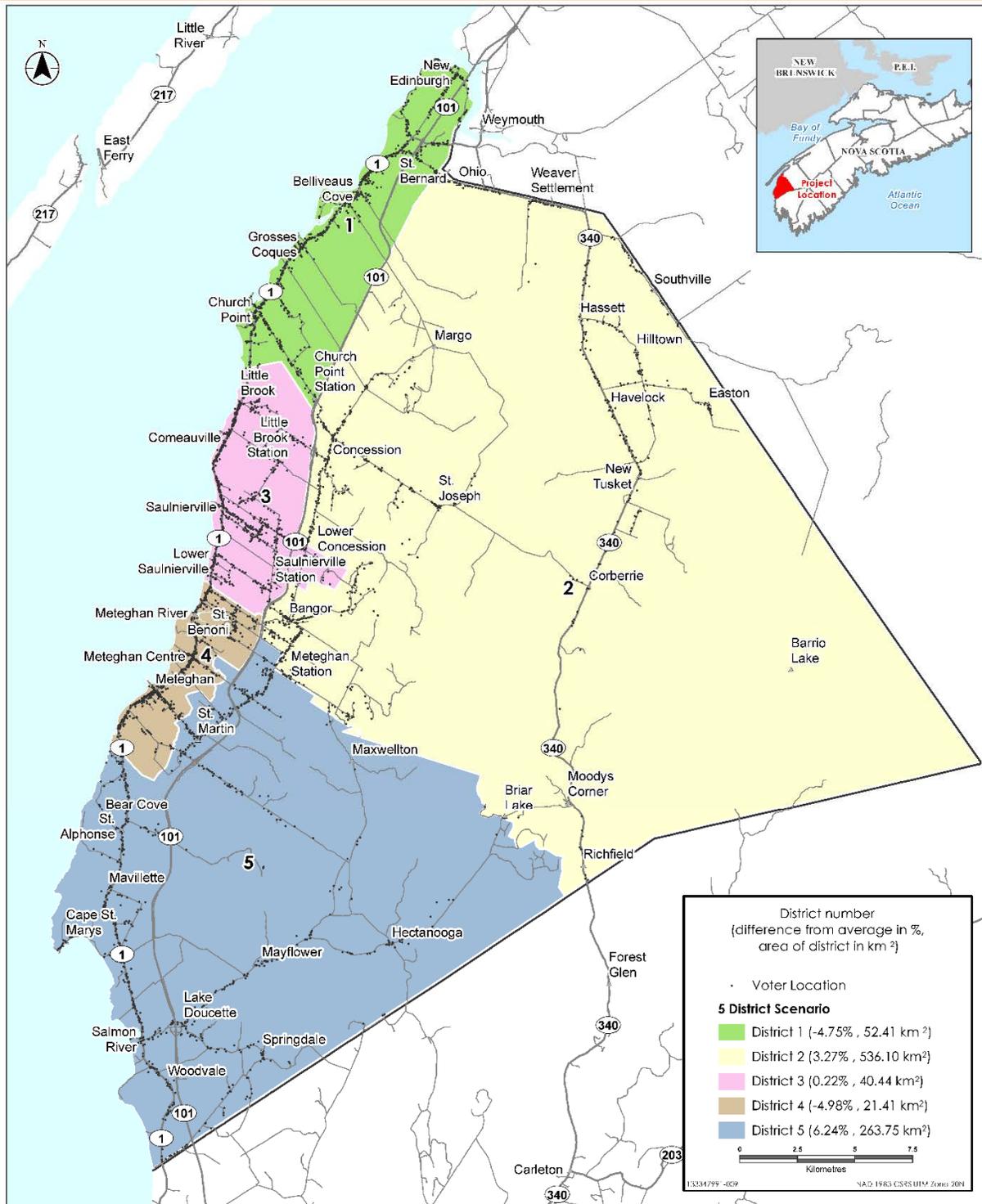
The five-district scenario required more radical adjustments than the eight-district scenario. With five districts, the average number of electors per district increased by more than 60% to 1,346. The new districts must combine large portions of existing districts to come within the parity standard (1,211 to 1,481).

Stantec proposed the following five districts:

- **District 1** comprises coastal areas of current District 1, along with Church Point and Grosse Coques, which are now in District 2. It has 1,282 electors, 4.75% below the average of all five proposed electoral districts. We used Highway 101 as the proposed boundary as the areas of Belliveau Cove and Grosse Coques west of the highway are essentially vacant (two electors live west of the 101 in Belliveau Cove) and the limited access road will create a strong and recognizable boundary.
- **District 2** includes all of current District 2. We added all of Concession, and Lower Concession, Saulnierville Station, and St. Joseph from District 4, as well as all areas identified as Maxwellton and Briar Lake, which are now predominantly in District 8. The proposed district has 1,390 electors and is within 3.27% of the average of all the districts.

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Figure 5-4 Five-district Boundary Scenario, District of Clare



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

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- **District 3** combines Little Brook and other major communities on St. Mary's Bay to Lower Saulnierville. The area of Saulnierville Station along the west side of Eel Lake has been placed in proposed District 2 with residents from the east side of the lake. The district has 1,349 electors, or just three more electors (0.22%) than the average district.
- **District 4** incorporates all of Meteghan River and the closely associated communities of Meteghan, Meteghan Centre, and St. Benoni. It has 1,279 electors, which is 4.98% short of the average district.
- **District 5** takes in most of current District 7 outside of Meteghan and all of current District 8 except Briar Lake. With 1,430 electors, it has 6.24% more than the average district.

With five districts, it was possible to combine several communities that are currently divided among districts. The most notable are Meteghan and Meteghan River, which are currently separated with parts of Meteghan River in Districts 6 and 7, and parts of Meteghan in Districts 7 and 8. On the other hand, Meteghan Station and St. Martin cannot be included with the coastal communities without creating a district that far exceeds the parity guidelines.

Meteghan Station and St. Martin were incorporated in proposed Districts 2 and 5 along with Concession and other communities along Second Division Road. Although these communities are more closely associated with coastal communities than with inland communities along Route 340 in current District 2 or along Hectanooga Road and Norwood Road in current District 8, they are essential to raise the numbers in new Districts 2 and 5 sufficiently to satisfy the NSUARB parity guideline.

Table 5-2 Electors by Polling District, Revised District Boundary Scenarios, District of Clare

Polling District	Eight-district Scenario				Polling District	Five-district Scenario			
	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation		Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation
1	71.4	792	-49	-5.85%	1	52.4	1,282	-64	-4.75%
2	431.1	857	16	1.87%	2	527.4	1,390	44	3.27%
3	33.6	790	-51	-6.09%	3	36.9	1,349	3	0.22%
4	25.0	800	-41	-4.90%	4	59.5	1,279	-67	-4.98%
5	31.9	889	48	5.68%	5	237.9	1,430	84	6.24%
6	21.1	933	92	10.91%					
7	77.5	872	31	3.66%					
8	212.4	797	-44	-5.26%					
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>914.1</b>	<b>6,730</b>			<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>914.1</b>	<b>6,730</b>		
<b>Averages</b>	<b>114.3</b>	<b>841</b>			<b>Averages</b>	<b>182.8</b>	<b>1,346</b>		

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd.

## 5.5 BOUNDARY REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING

About 30 members of the public attended the February 6 meeting in the Clare Veterans Centre in Saulnierville at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, February 6, 2018. The meeting was organized along similar lines to the January 16 session. Display materials were set up in the room beforehand and attendees were encouraged to review them before taking their seats. Materials included the three panels presented at the January meeting; two new panels prepared to explain the boundary creation process and the two scenarios presented; and three maps showing the electoral boundaries employed in Clare for the 2016 election and the eight and five-district scenarios.

When the interest of participants in the displays was observed to be waning at about 7:20 pm, John Heseltine suggested beginning the formal presentation. Following a brief introduction by Clare CAO Stephane Cyr, Mr. Heseltine presented a PowerPoint recapping Phase 1 research and conclusions and, then, presenting Phase 2 work. With respect to Phase 2, he outlined criteria for boundary determination, the method applied by Stantec to determine boundaries that would meet the voter parity standard, and the two scenarios he arrived at.

Following the presentation, members of the public were invited to make presentations to the group. Gerard Theriault, President of the Clare Civic Association and Christine Chandler, a member of the Association, made separate presentations. Mr. Theriault presented the Association's case for reducing council size. He emphasized the results of a municipal reorganization study completed by consultant Rick Ramsay in 2015 and the small number of committees he believed Clare Council members were required to deal with. He noted that 13 Nova Scotia municipalities have five-member councils, including the rural municipalities of Barrington, Digby, and Richmond.

Municipal staff subsequently noted that some of the information Mr. Theriault presented was incorrect. Specifically, municipal staff informed Stantec that Clare Councillors serve on 22 committees rather than five as Mr. Theriault suggested. Staff provided a list, which included five committees of council and 17 other community or regional bodies. In total, the eight Council members fill 46 committee positions, an average of nearly six each.

Ms. Chandler asserted that the results of the survey did not favour the council size status quo particularly strongly. She asked Mr. Heseltine whether margins in favour of the status quo in other surveys were not similar to the difference found in Clare. Mr. Heseltine responded that his memory of the percentage results of past surveys was not good but that he did recall that most favoured council size reduction over the status quo.

When asked, other members of the audience declined the opportunity to make a presentation. None had any questions or comments either. Mr. Heseltine, consequently, adjourned the presentation but encouraged participants to review the maps and display materials, and consider whether they had any comments on the boundary lines drawn for either scenario. Most stayed for a time to look over the maps and discuss the issues with the consultants and each other.

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We set out Post-it notes and pens to allow participants to write comments and put them in an appropriate location of each map. Several comments were left on the maps and Mr. Heseltine discussed the related issues with participants. The main issues raised pertained to the representation of French and English communities in the proposed scenarios. In both cases, participants noted the divide between Francophone areas immediately east of Highway 101 (e.g., Concession and Saulnierville Station) and the predominantly Anglophone communities distributed along Route 340 farther inland.

When Mr. Heseltine noted that the inclusion of Francophone communities in District 2 was necessary to bring in sufficient voters to satisfy the parity criterion, residents with whom he spoke suggested that the predominantly English communities of Weaver Settlement and Ohio might be added to District 2 in the eight-district arrangement so that at least a portion of Concession might be transferred to one or more of the predominantly French districts on the coast. A Councillor also suggested that residents on the west side of Salmon River Lake, which were incorporated in proposed District 8, normally reach their properties via d'Entremont Road, which originates in proposed District 5. He and others acknowledged, however, that residents also make use of Norwood Road, which runs through Maxwellton to Salmon River Lake with proposed District 8.

The issues with Weaver Settlement and Ohio, and Salmon River Lake do not apply to the five-district arrangement in which both communities were incorporated with inland areas in proposed District 2. Participants, however, noted the need to combine Francophone and Anglophone communities in proposed Districts 2 and 5 to meet the voter parity guideline. The main improvement suggested was to consider moving at least the part of St. Martin west of Highway 101 into proposed District 4 with the closely related community of Meteghan.

## 5.6 FINAL BOUNDARY SCENARIOS

Stantec focused on input from the Phase 2 Public Meeting in refining the proposed boundaries for each council size option into final form. We recognized that the issues raised by citizens reinforced the emphasis many speakers at our first public session in January placed on the cultural makeup of the municipality. All commenters on boundaries sought to reinforce linguistic identities by consolidating Francophone and Anglophone populations within homogenous districts, as has been traditionally done in the municipality with the Anglophone population reflected in Districts 2 and, to a lesser extent, District 8, and French communities dominating in the other six districts on the coast.

### 5.6.1 Revised Eight-district Scenario

**Figure 5-6** illustrates the revised eight-district scenario. As noted, several commentators suggested the communities of Ohio and Weaver Settlement, which we understand to be primarily Anglophone, should remain in District 2. Others suggested that Concession and St. Joseph, which they said are Francophone areas, should not be in District 2. Dealing with these suggestions required changes to not only proposed District 2 but also to proposed Districts 1 and 3.

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While District 2 could readily accept additional electors from Ohio and Weaver Settlement, Grosse Coques had to be added to District 1 to replace the numbers it lost from those communities. The subtraction of Grosse Coques from District 3 worked well because District 3 is also predominantly Francophone and abuts much of Concession. With Grosse Coques removed, District 3 needed to add Concession to bolster its numbers. Electors in Concession more than compensated for the loss of Grosse Coques (**Table 5-3**).

The subtraction of Concession from District 2, on the other hand, considerably outweighed the addition of 58 electors from Ohio and Weaver Settlement. As a result, it is not feasible to remove either the northernmost portion of Concession around Lac a Victor or any part of St. Joseph from District 2. To reach the -10% parity guideline, we transferred the 64 electors in Briar Lake and Hectanooga, as well as an isolated pair of voters on Norwood Clearwater Lake at the eastern edge of Springdale, from proposed District 8 to proposed District 2. The two on Norwood Clearwater Lake can be reached from within either District 2 or District 8 but, in both cases, it is necessary to leave Clare and travel a short distance in Yarmouth County. The two electors bring the total number in District 2 to 84 less than the average or precisely the lower limit of the parity guideline. The area of the district was reduced to 522.5 km<sup>2</sup> from 531.1 km<sup>2</sup> previously proposed.

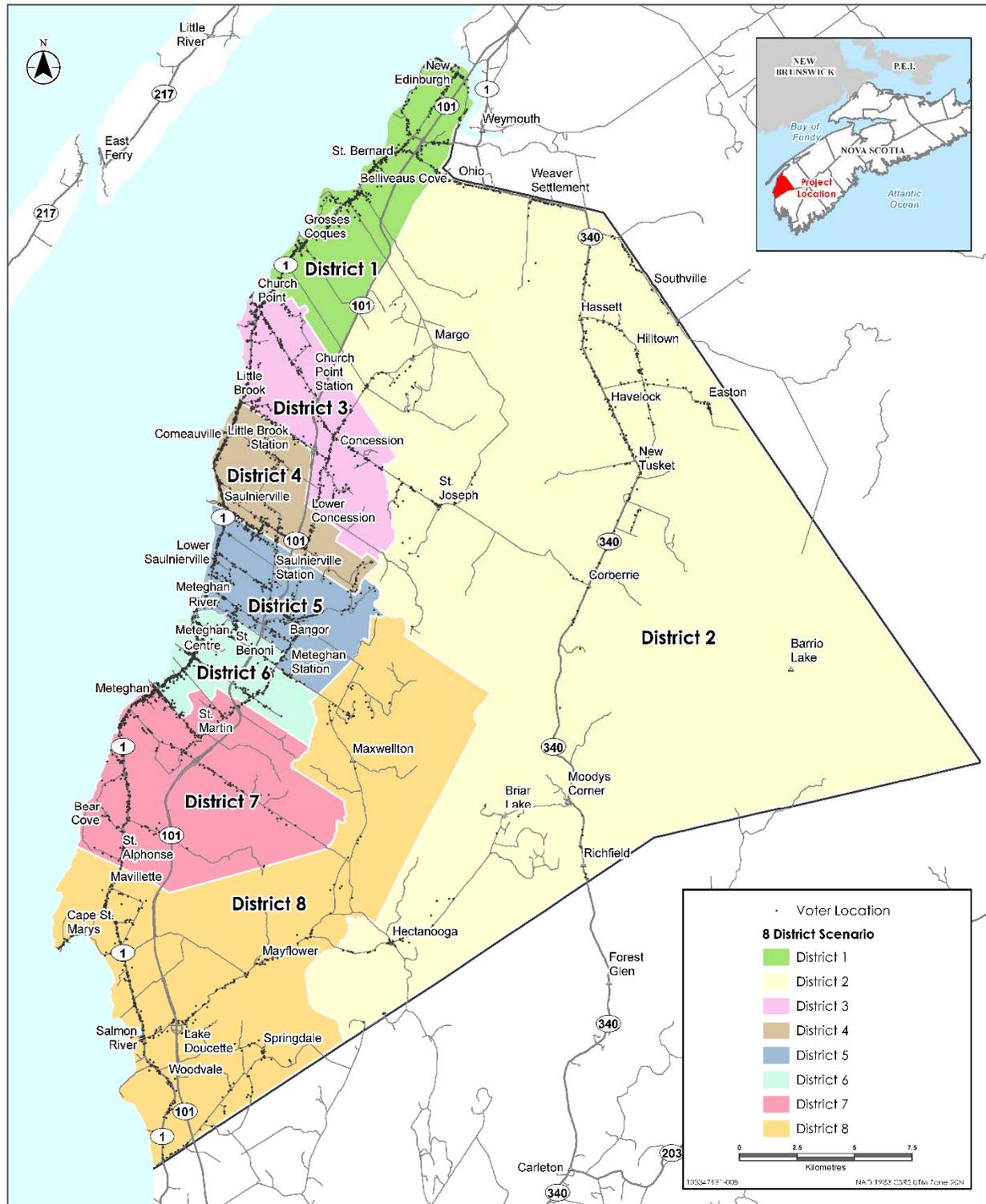
To keep District 8 within the guideline, we added the portion of Mavillette in both the current and proposed District 7 to District 8. The move consolidates all of Mavillette in a single district and strengthens the Francophone component in District 8 with 475 electors in the French communities of Mavillette, Cape St. Mary's, Salmon River, and Lake Doucette and 326 in the remaining, largely English areas. Proposed District 7, which had 3.66% more electors than the average before losing its area of Mavillette, is still comfortably within the parity guideline at -4.67%.

A final change on our own initiative was to transfer the small portion of St. Benoni now in District 5 to proposed District 5 from proposed District 6. While the change from our previous proposal divides St. Benoni, we noted that St. Benoni is encircled by the community of Meteghan River and the change preserves the long-standing boundary between the two districts, which runs on Marc Comeau Road and the Meteghan River. The southern community boundary of St. Benoni, which we had proposed to use is less distinct and the loss of electors from St. Benoni brings the proposed District 6, which had 10.91% more electors than average, within the parity guideline (6.39%). District 5, however, goes up to 10.19% or two electors over the guideline.

The changes, excepting the shift of St. Benoni, directly address comments received. In our opinion, they further consolidate Francophone and Anglophone communities. Most Anglophone electors are in proposed District 2 as they traditionally have been. The remainder are in District 8, where they are in reasonable balance with Francophone electors. The parity criterion is satisfied to the same degree as previously with just one district outside the NSUARB requirement. The degree of variance from the standard, furthermore, is slightly reduced relative to our original proposal. District 5 would be within the guideline if it had two fewer electors.

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Figure 5-5 Revised Eight-district Boundary Scenario, District of Clare



Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

### 5.6.2 Revised Five-district Scenario

**Figure 5-6** illustrates the revised five-district scenario. The primary comment on our five-district proposal was to bring the community of St. Martin into proposed District 4. Doing so subtracted 224 electors from proposed District 5. The large loss required us to add electors to District 5 from the portion of Meteghan Station in current District 6, as well as all electors in the communities of Maxwellton and Richfield, both of which we previously proposed to continue in District 2. To compensate District 2 for its losses, we added the portion of Meteghan Station in current District 5, which we previously included in proposed District 4. The transfer of Meteghan Station was not enough, however, to bring District 4 within the maximum parity variance, although it raised the number of electors in proposed District 2 comfortably above the minimum (-4.53%) (**Table 5-3**).

District 4 is 11.66% above the maximum, which we consider a moderate discrepancy. If the Municipality wanted to take this proposal to the NSUARB, the variance can be justified as necessary to preserve the integrity of Meteghan and adjacent communities included in the district. Whether this arrangement is superior to our proposal described in **Section 5.4.2** above, is open to debate as the consolidation of St. Martin must be weighed against the separation of Meteghan Station.

Table 5-3 Electors by Polling District, Revised District Boundary Scenarios, District of Clare

Polling District	Eight-district Scenario				Five-district Scenario				
	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation	Polling District	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Electors	Variation from Average	% Variation
<b>1</b>	41.0	906	65	7.70%	<b>1</b>	52.4	1,282	-64	-4.75%
<b>2</b>	522.5	757	-84	<b>-10.01%</b>	<b>2</b>	524.2	1,429	83	6.17%
<b>3</b>	40.1	842	1	0.09%	<b>3</b>	40.3	1,290	-56	-4.16%
<b>4</b>	25.0	800	-41	-4.90%	<b>4</b>	58.2	1,503	157	<b>11.66%</b>
<b>5</b>	32.2	927	86	<b>10.19%</b>	<b>5</b>	238.9	1,226	-120	-8.92%
<b>6</b>	20.7	895	54	6.39%					
<b>7</b>	69.6	802	-39	-4.67%					
<b>8</b>	163.1	801	-40	-4.78%					
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>914.1</b>	<b>6,730</b>			<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>914.1</b>	<b>6,730</b>		
<b>Averages</b>	<b>114.3</b>	<b>841</b>			<b>Averages</b>	<b>182.8</b>	<b>1,346</b>		

Source: Stantec Consulting Ltd.

## 5.7 RECOMMENDATION

Public consultation for this review was extensive. The online survey received 512 responses from residents of Clare and more than 100 residents attended the two public meetings we conducted. The process has been well-covered by the local press as well as receiving fortuitous attention from provincial-level media, which gives us confidence that residents of Clare were broadly aware of the Boundary Review and the opportunities for their participation.

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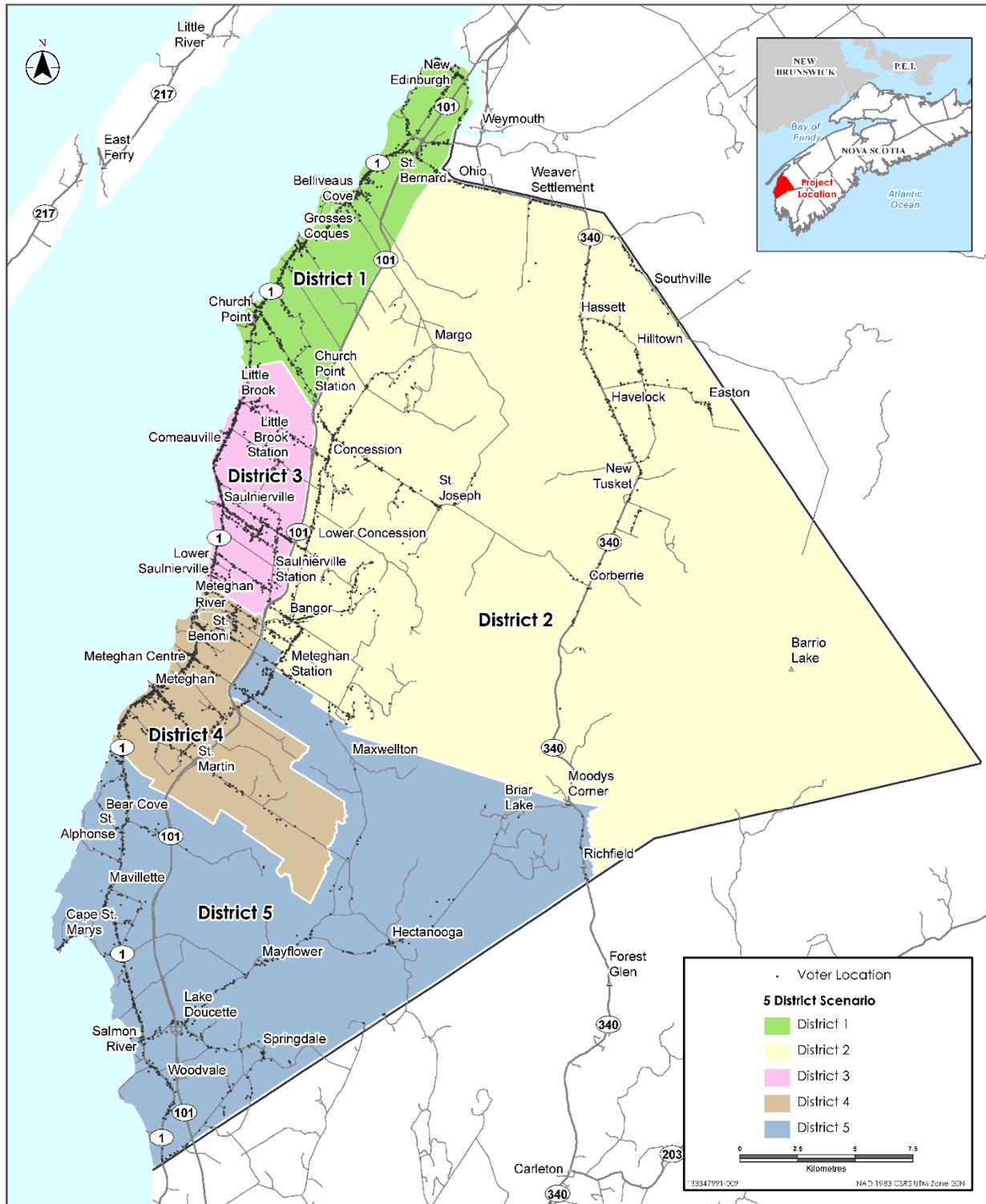
While a constituency in Clare wants the size of the Municipality's Council to be reduced, each round of public input confirmed to our satisfaction that the majority of Clare residents would prefer to continue with an eight-member municipal council. Members of the Clare Civic Association articulated sound arguments for council size reduction and others supported their views but more voices in the community spoke for the status quo, which they clearly consider important to the maintenance of the Francophone linguistic identity of the municipality.

While the five-district approach offers more flexibility to achieve voter parity, it requires combinations of English and French communities within proposed districts that may, depending on electoral outcomes, compromise the representation of both. The eight-district framework continues the traditional arrangement in which District 2 provides a largely Anglophone district, District 8 is comprised of a reasonably even mix of Anglophone and Francophone populations, and the remaining districts are predominantly Francophone. Boundary adjustments following the second public meeting sought to reinforce this structure.

*Given the foregoing, we recommend that residents of the Municipality of the District of Clare continue to be represented by eight Council members elected from eight districts conforming to the boundaries shown in **Figure 5-5**, above.*

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Figure 5-6 Revised Five-district Boundary Scenario, District of Clare



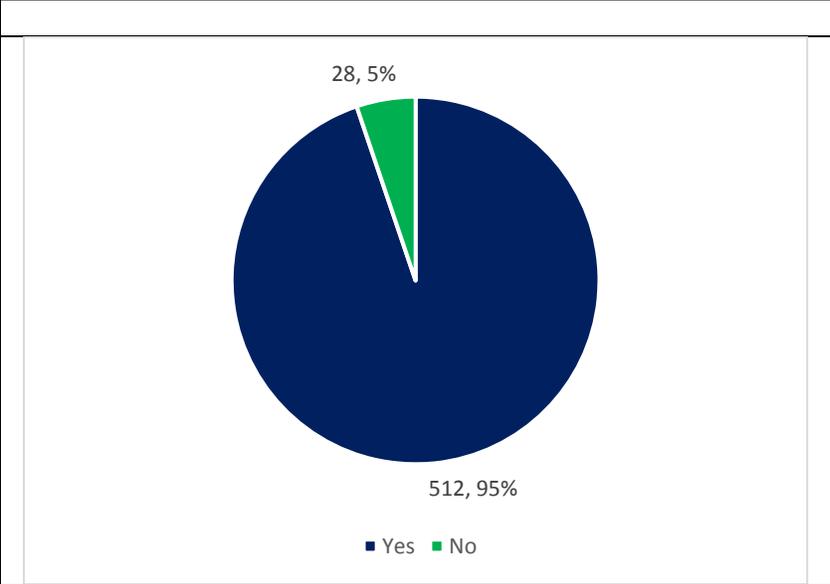
Source Stantec Consulting Ltd.

**Appendix A COUNCIL SIZE SURVEY RESULTS**



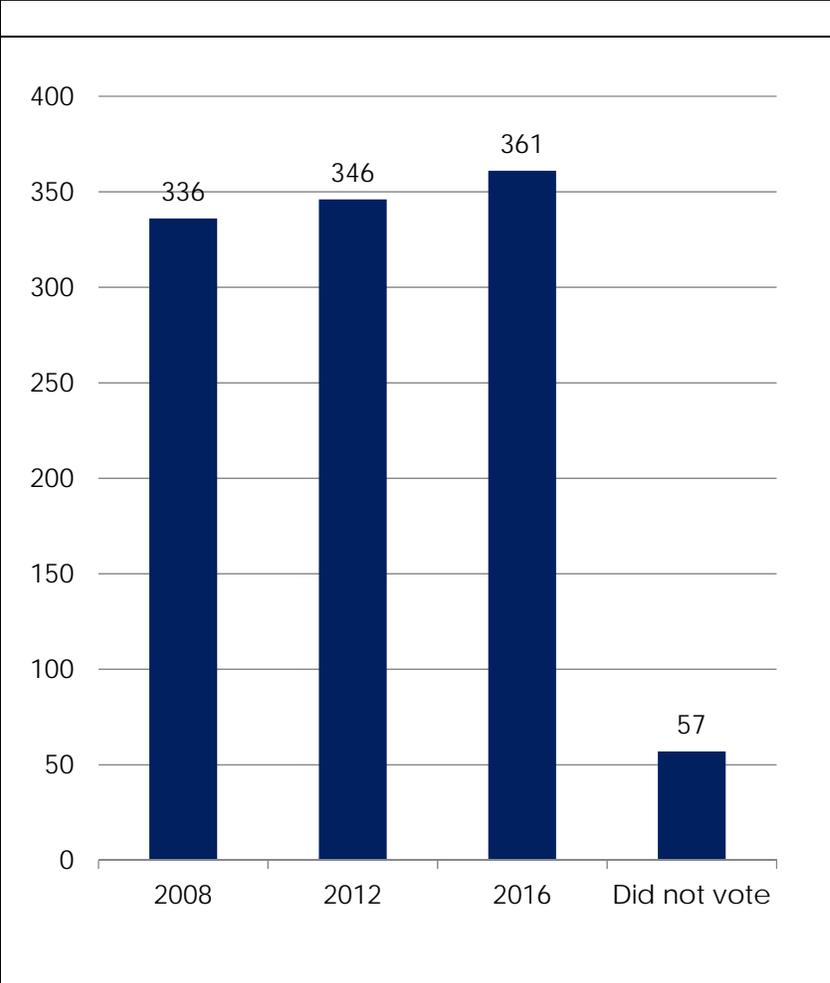
**1. Do you live in the Municipality of the District of Clare?**

In Clare	Count	%
Yes	512	94.8%
No	28	5.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



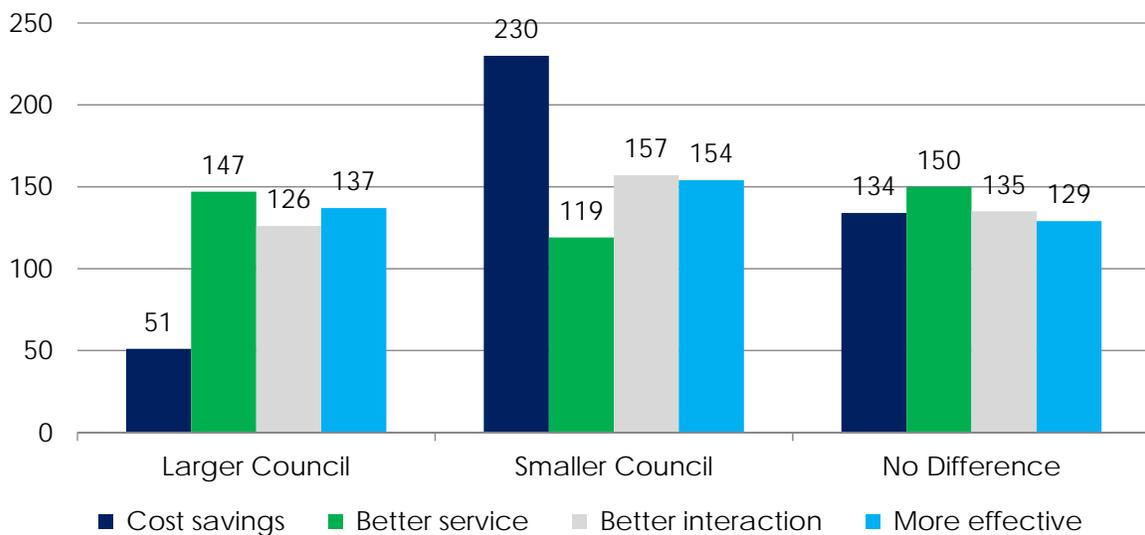
**2. Please indicate if you voted in any of the past three municipal Council elections in the District of Clare. [CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY]**

Election	Voted	%
2008	336	81.2%
2012	346	83.6%
2016	361	87.2%
Did not vote	57	13.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



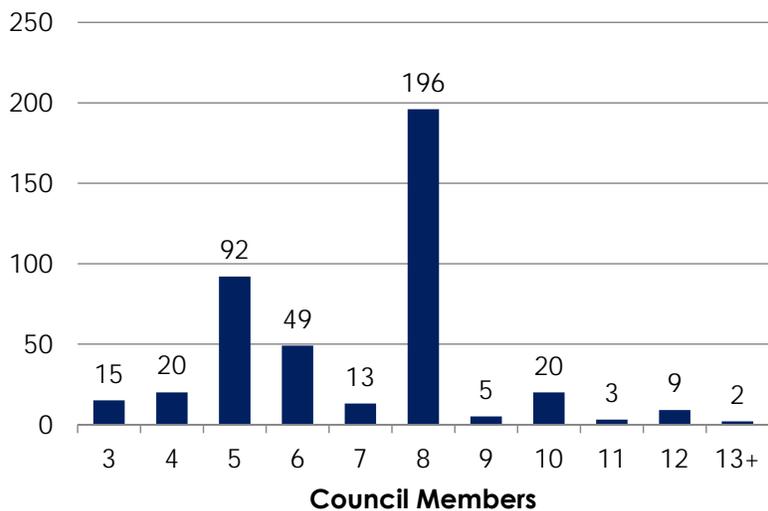
**3. The District of Clare currently has an eight-member council, which includes a Warden, who is elected from among the Council members. Please indicate whether you would expect a larger or smaller council to have the following benefits for the District of Clare.**

Benefit	Smaller Council	Larger Council	No Difference	TOTALS	No Response
Cost savings	51	230	134	415	18.9%
Better service to citizens	147	119	150	416	18.8%
Better interaction among Councillors	126	157	135	418	18.4%
More effective municipal government	137	154	129	420	18.0%

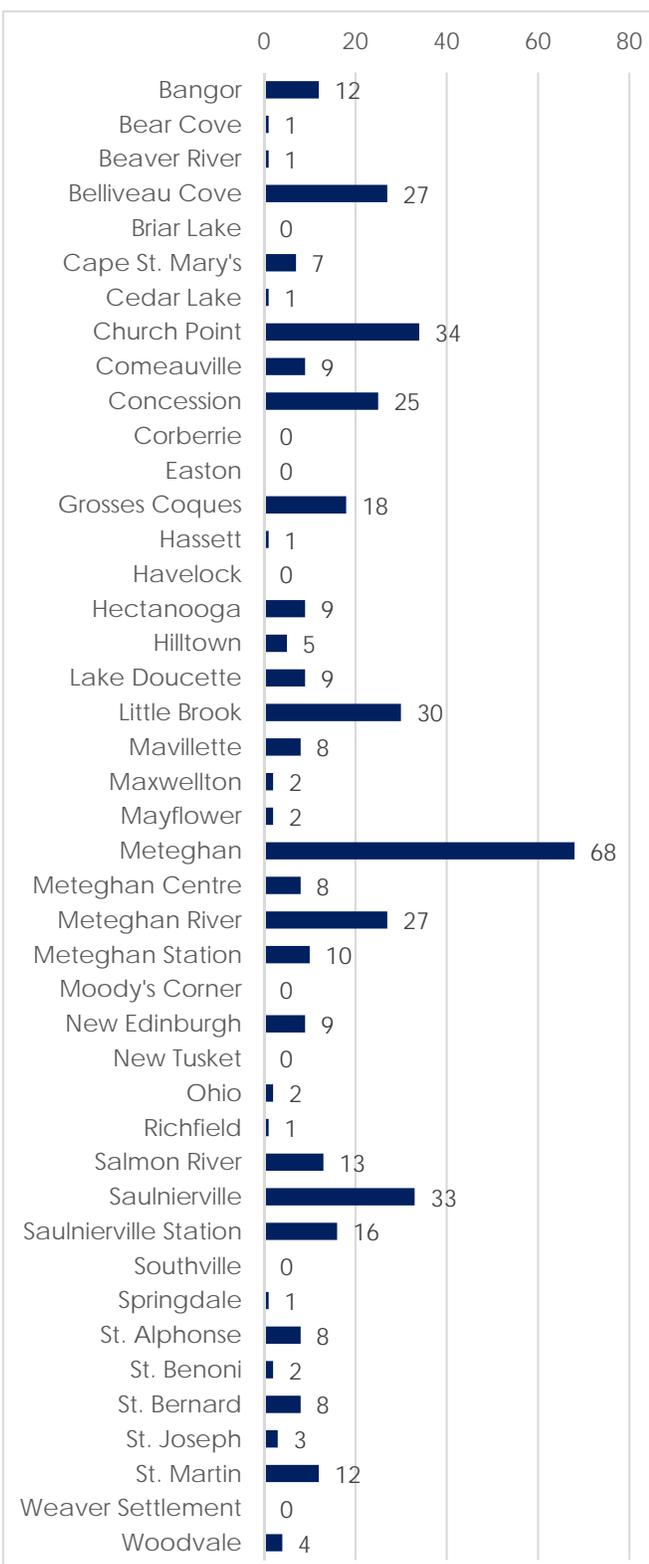


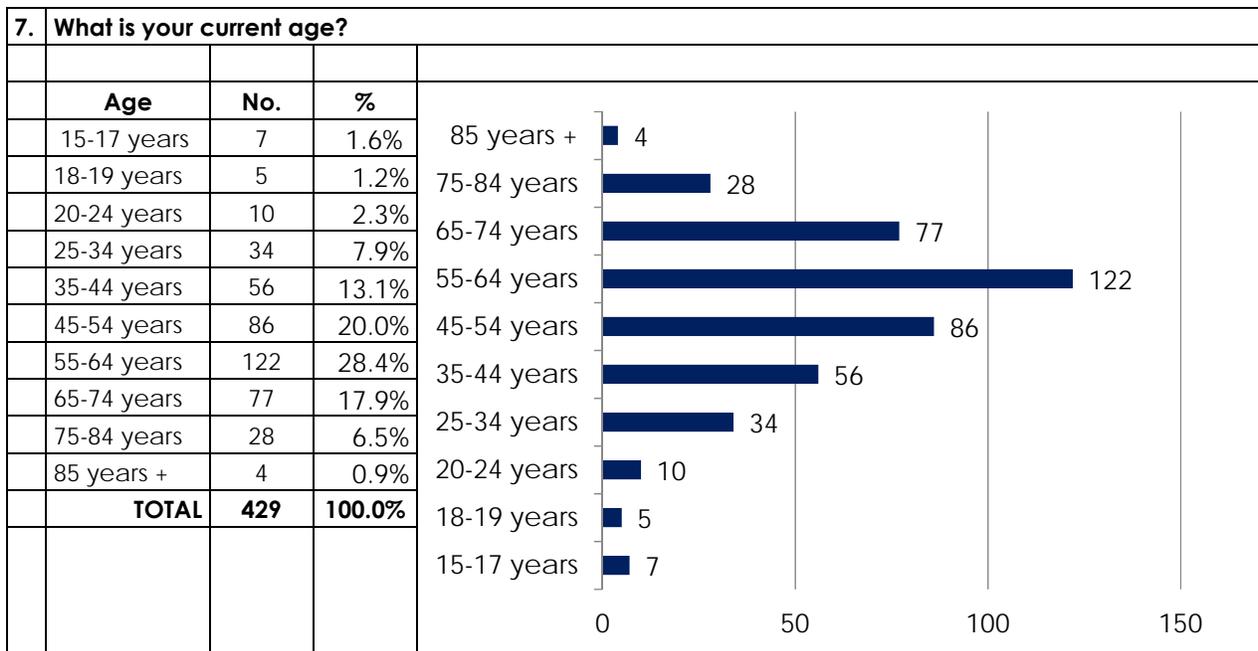
**4. Please indicate the number of Council members you would prefer to have on Clare District Council (the minimum Council size is three members).**

Councillors	Count	%
3	15	3.5%
4	20	4.7%
5	92	21.7%
6	49	11.6%
7	13	3.1%
8	196	46.2%
9	5	1.2%
10	20	4.7%
11	3	0.7%
12	9	2.1%
13+	2	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



6. In what Clare community do you currently live?			
Community	Count	%	
Bangor	12	2.8%	12
Bear Cove	1	0.2%	1
Beaver River	1	0.2%	1
Belliveau Cove	27	6.3%	27
Briar Lake	0	0.0%	0
Cape St. Mary's	7	1.6%	7
Cedar Lake	1	0.2%	1
Church Point	34	8.0%	34
Comeauville	9	2.1%	9
Concession	25	5.9%	25
Corberrie	0	0.0%	0
Easton	0	0.0%	0
Grosses Coques	18	4.2%	18
Hassett	1	0.2%	1
Havelock	0	0.0%	0
Hectanooga	9	2.1%	9
Hilltown	5	1.2%	5
Lake Doucette	9	2.1%	9
Little Brook	30	7.0%	30
Mavillette	8	1.9%	8
Maxwellton	2	0.4%	2
Mayflower	2	0.5%	2
Meteghan	68	16.0%	68
Meteghan Centre	8	1.9%	8
Meteghan River	27	6.3%	27
Meteghan Station	10	2.3%	10
Moody's Corner	0	0.0%	0
New Edinburgh	9	2.1%	9
New Tusket	0	0.0%	0
Ohio	2	0.5%	2
Richfield	1	0.2%	1
Salmon River	13	3.1%	13
Saulnierville	33	7.7%	33
Saulnierville Station	16	3.8%	16
Southville	0	0.0%	0
Springdale	1	0.2%	1
St. Alphonse	8	1.9%	8
St. Benoni	2	0.5%	2
St. Bernard	8	1.9%	8
St. Joseph	3	0.7%	3
St. Martin	12	2.8%	12
Weaver Settlement	0	0.0%	0
Woodvale	4	0.9%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	









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