

**NARRATIVE**  
RESEARCH

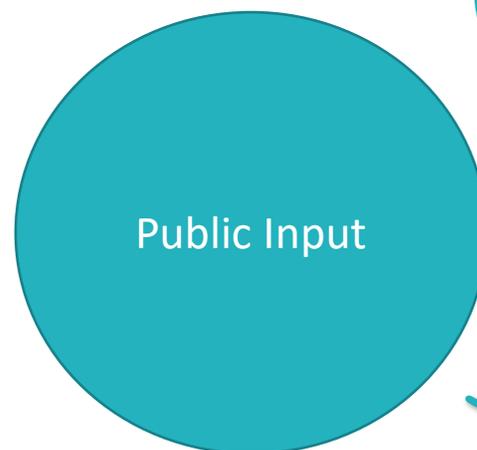
# 2022 Halifax Regional Council District Boundary Review, Phase One Study – What we Heard Report

Key Highlights Presentation

May 2022

**HALIFAX**





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



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



- Average survey length: 16 minutes



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



**Approach:**

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



**Target Audience:**

Participants included:

- All 16 HRM Councillors
- The Mayor



**Length**

Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.



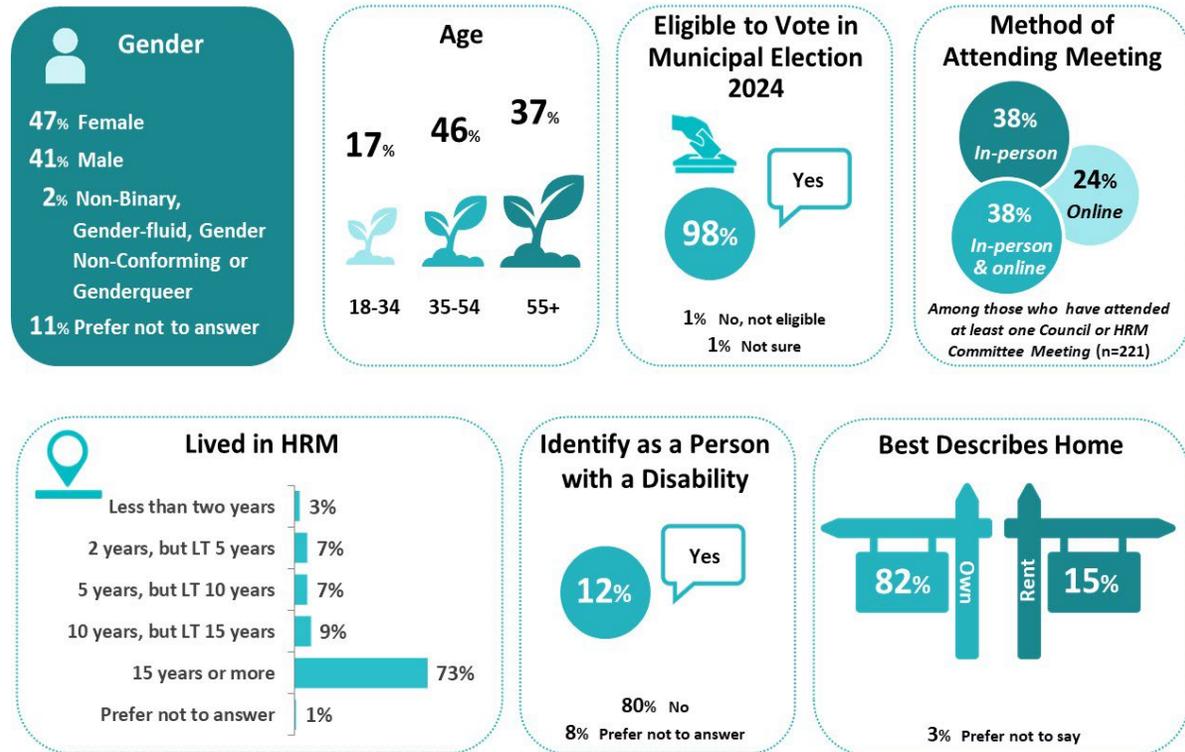
Resident emails and input at Community Council meetings.



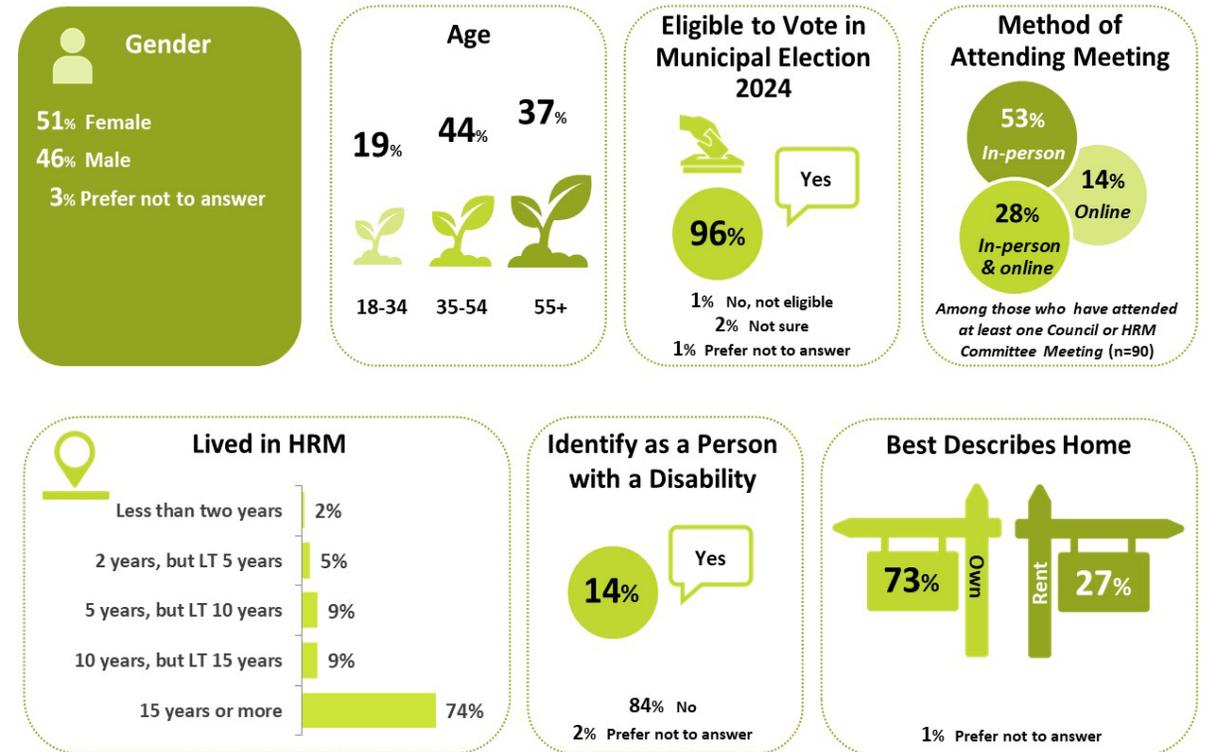
# Demographic Profile of Respondents

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

## Profile of Respondents – General Public (n=766)



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



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



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



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

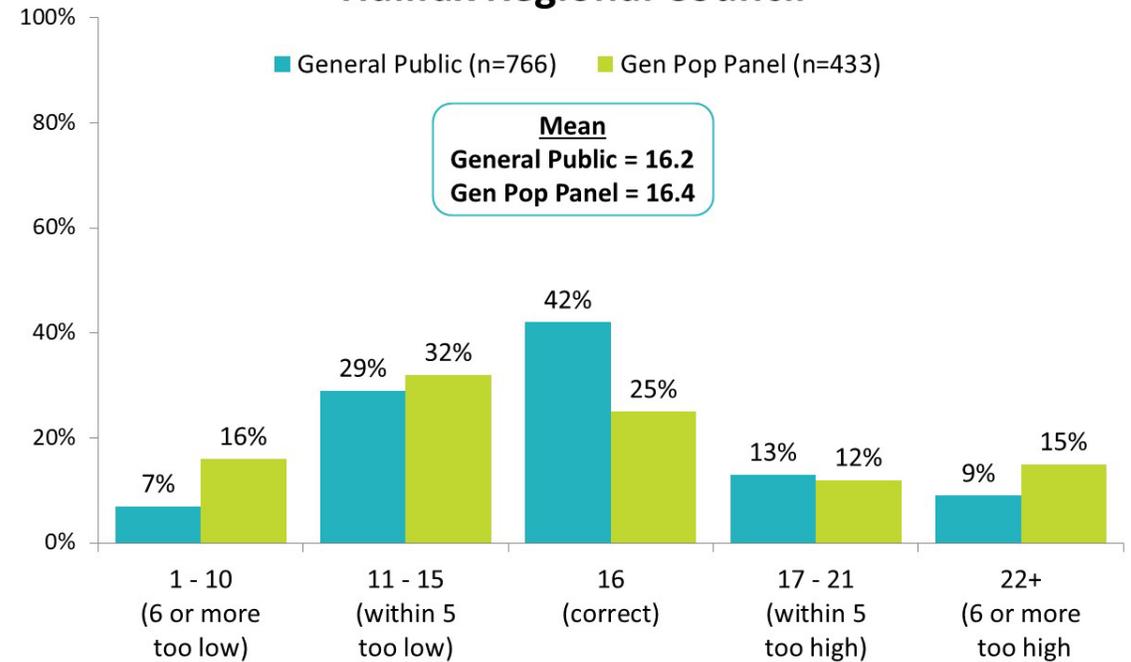


In assessing the five proposed criteria for determining district boundaries (*communities of interest, relative parity of voting power, geography, population density, and number of electors*) all are felt to be of high importance to residents and councillors, and should be considered during the planning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

**Unaided, residents generally are correct in how many people serve on Council**

**Those who are engaged are more likely to know the correct number**

## Number of Councillors Who Make Up Halifax Regional Council

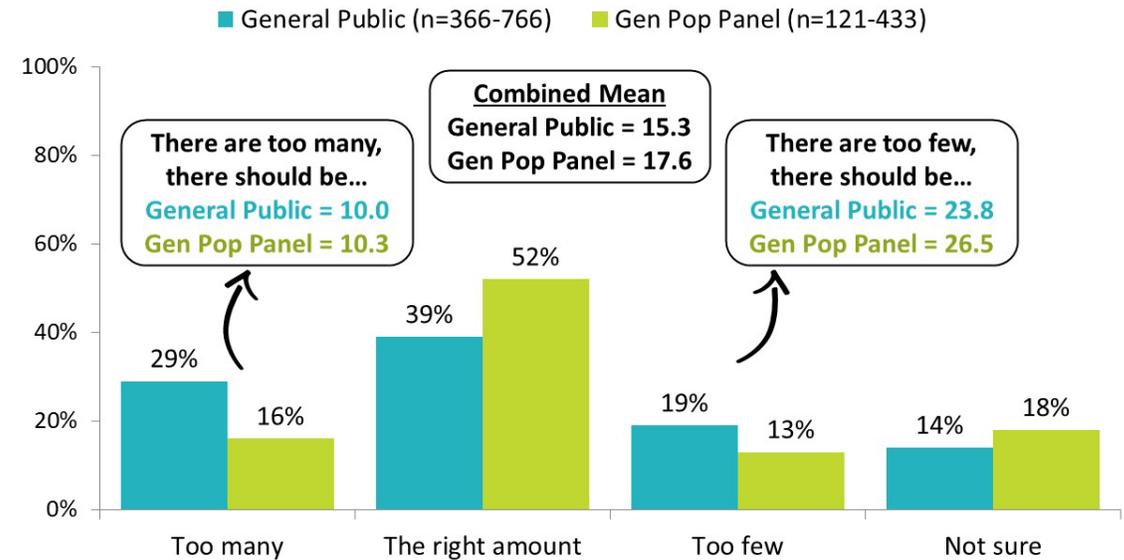


Q.A2: To the best of your knowledge, how many municipal councillors make up the Halifax Regional Council?  
 Note: Responses over 200 were excluded from the mean calculations for the general public and gen pop panel.

When provided with the current number of councillors, half of residents agree that it is the right amount to have on the Council. 16.

Among those who believe there are too many or too few, the combined average suggested number of councillors remains close to 16.

## Best Representation of Current Number of Councillors



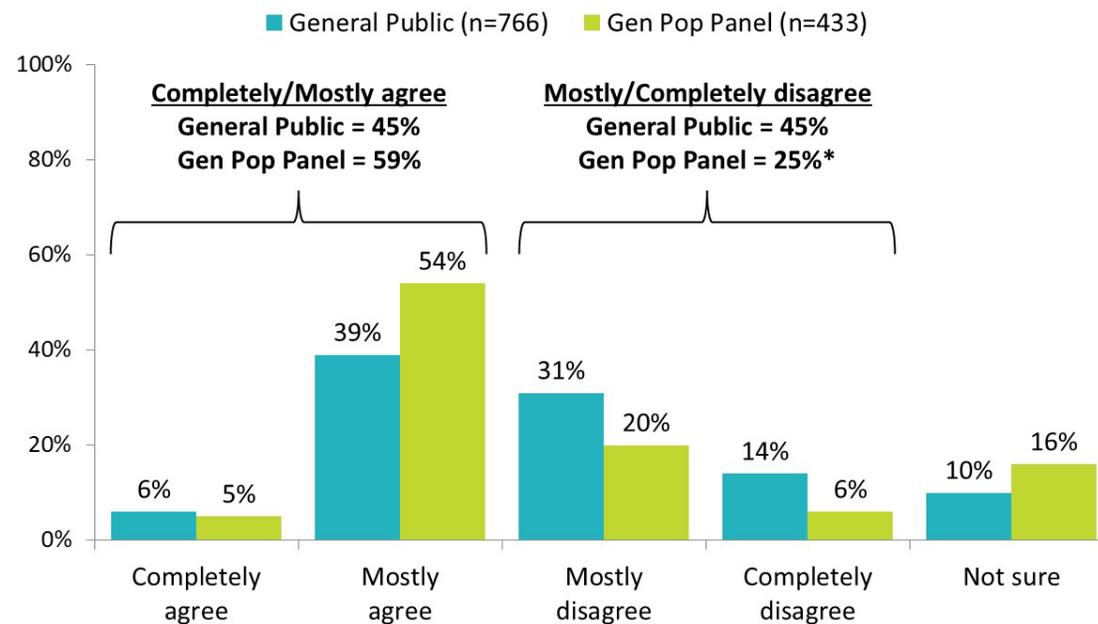
Q.B1: As you may be aware, the Halifax Regional Council currently includes 16 councillors and the mayor, who collectively serve approximately 440,000 residents. Based on what you know or have heard, which best represents your view on the current number of councillors? / Q.B2: [IF 'TOO MANY' OR 'TOO FEW'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

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

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

Councillors and the Mayor generally agreed that the current number of councillors is appropriate to represent residents.

## Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents



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

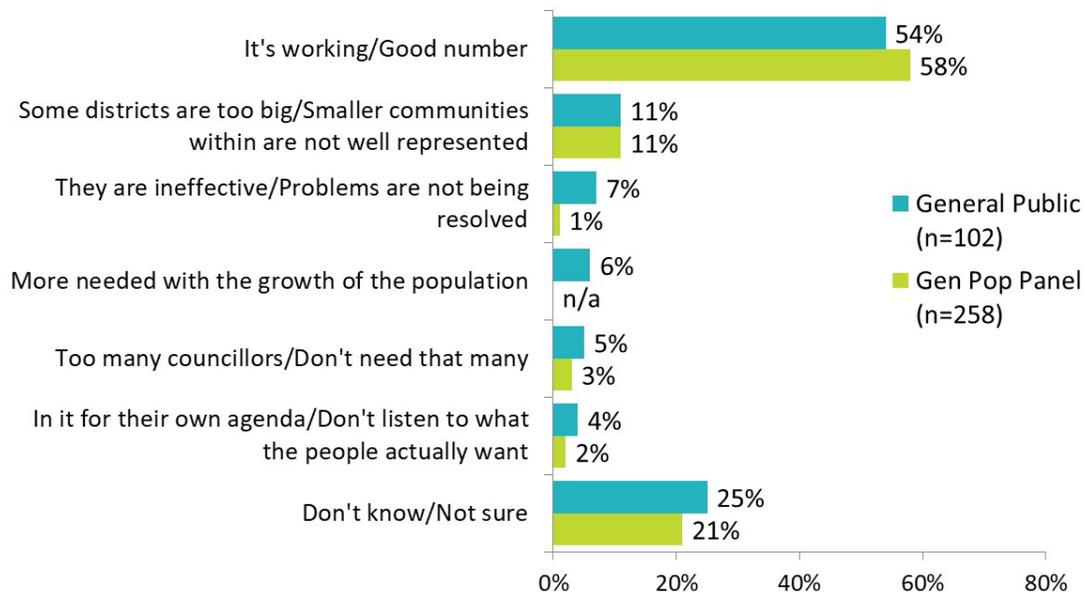


# Agreement / Disagreement on Adequate Representation

**It's functioning well in the view of those who agree, while those who disagree feel that some districts are too big or that there are inefficiencies.**

## Agreement That Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents

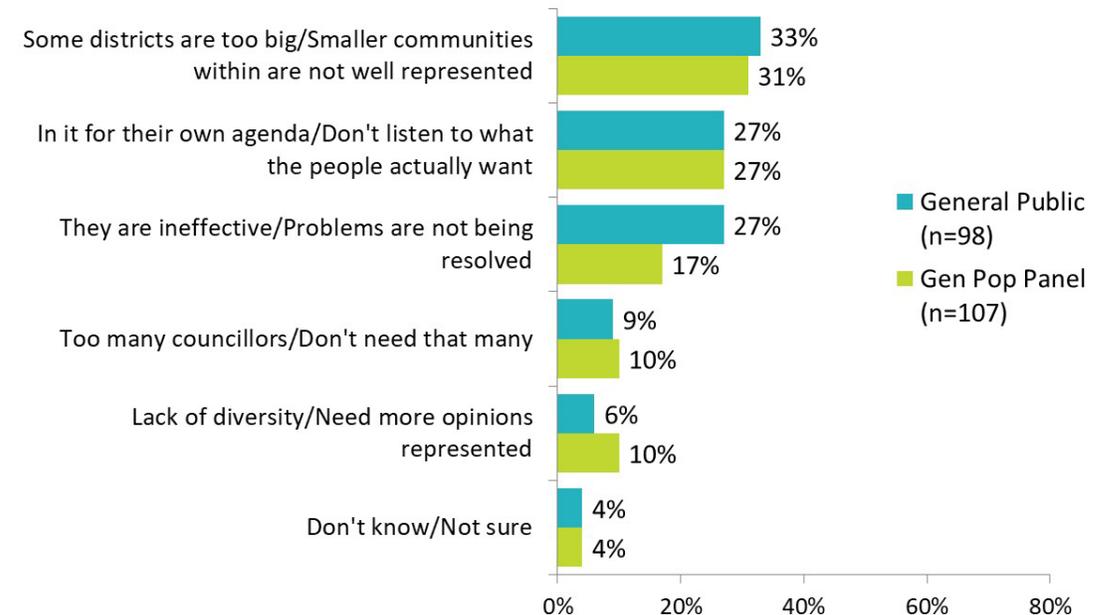
Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Completely/Mostly Agree



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

## Disagreement That Halifax Regional Council Adequately Represents Residents

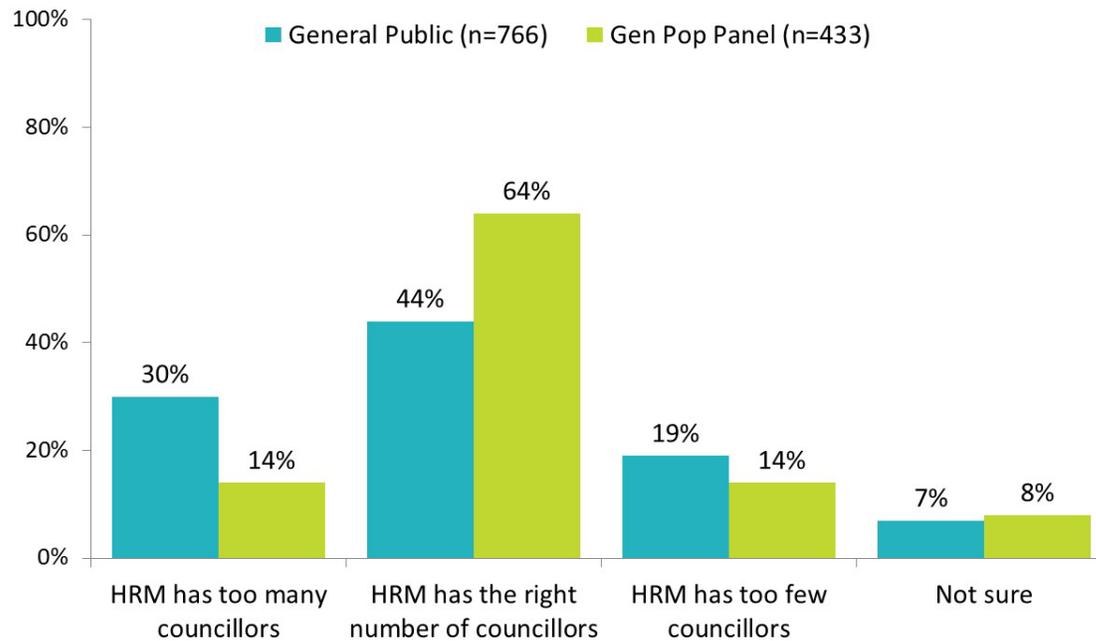
Key Unaided Mentions, Among Those Who Mostly/Completely Disagree



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

**When shown comparative examples across Canada, a majority feel that HRM has the right number of councillors.**

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

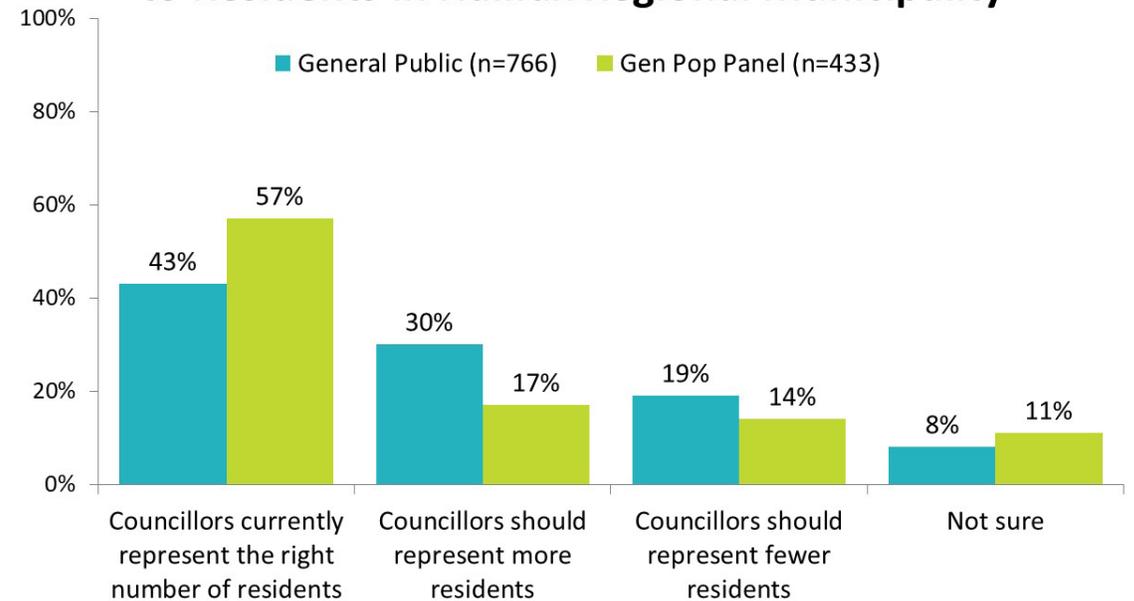


Q.C3: Seeing these comparisons, which best represents your view on ratio, or the number of councillors relative to residents in HRM?

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

**Councillors feel that they are able to adequately represent the number of residents in their districts, though the raw number of residents should not be the only factor – diversity of needs and issues, diversity of types of community and geography should also be considered.**

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

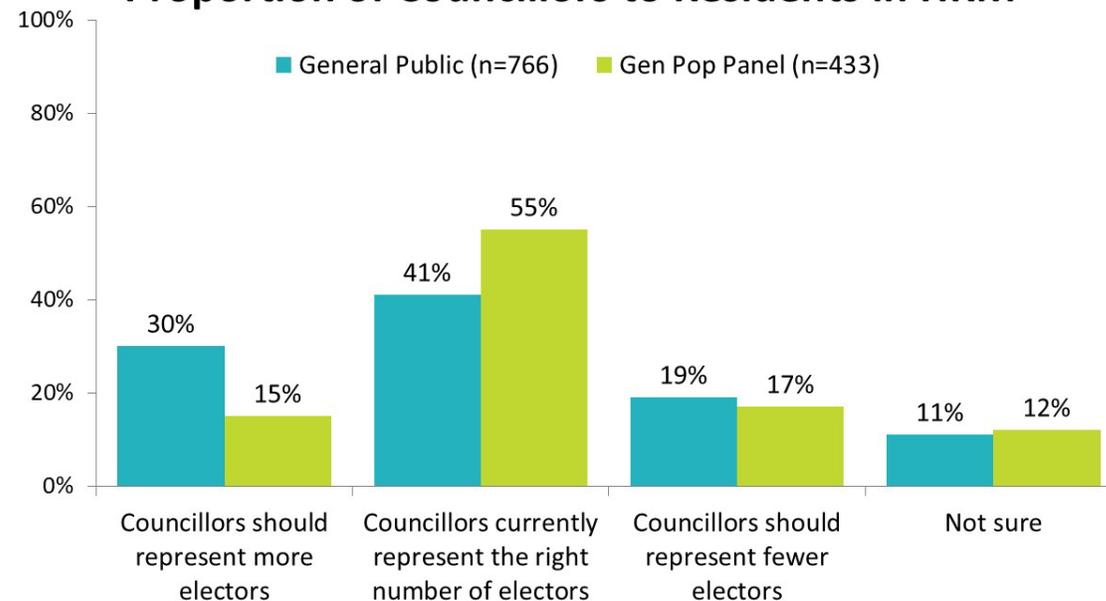


Q.C5a: Currently, councillors on Halifax Regional Council each represent a range of 20,000 to 31,000 residents. (Note: Residents includes all those living within a district, not just those who are eligible to vote). Which one of the following statements best represents your thoughts about the proportion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

**When shown comparatives to MLAs, more than half continue to believe that councillors currently represent the right number of electors.**

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

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



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

# Current Structure

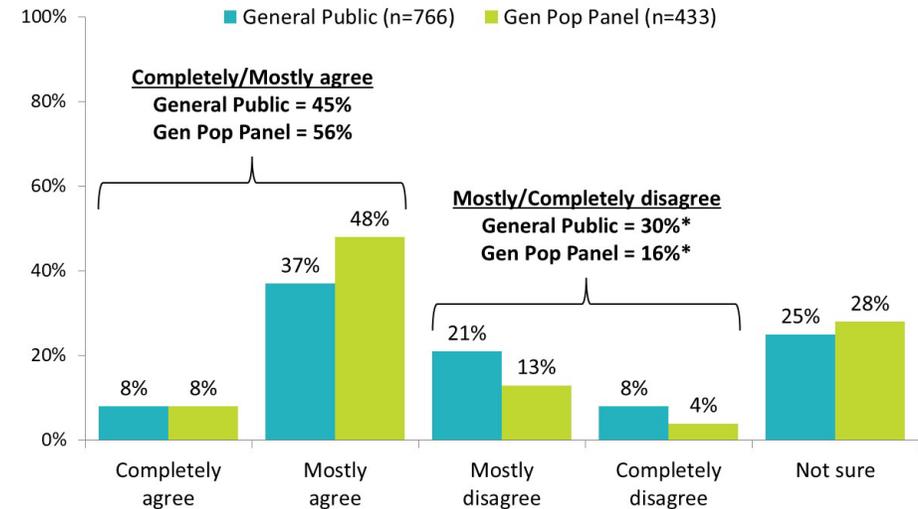
Following a description of HRM's governance structure, a small majority agree it adequately represents residents.

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

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



## Current Structure of Governance Can Adequately Represent Residents

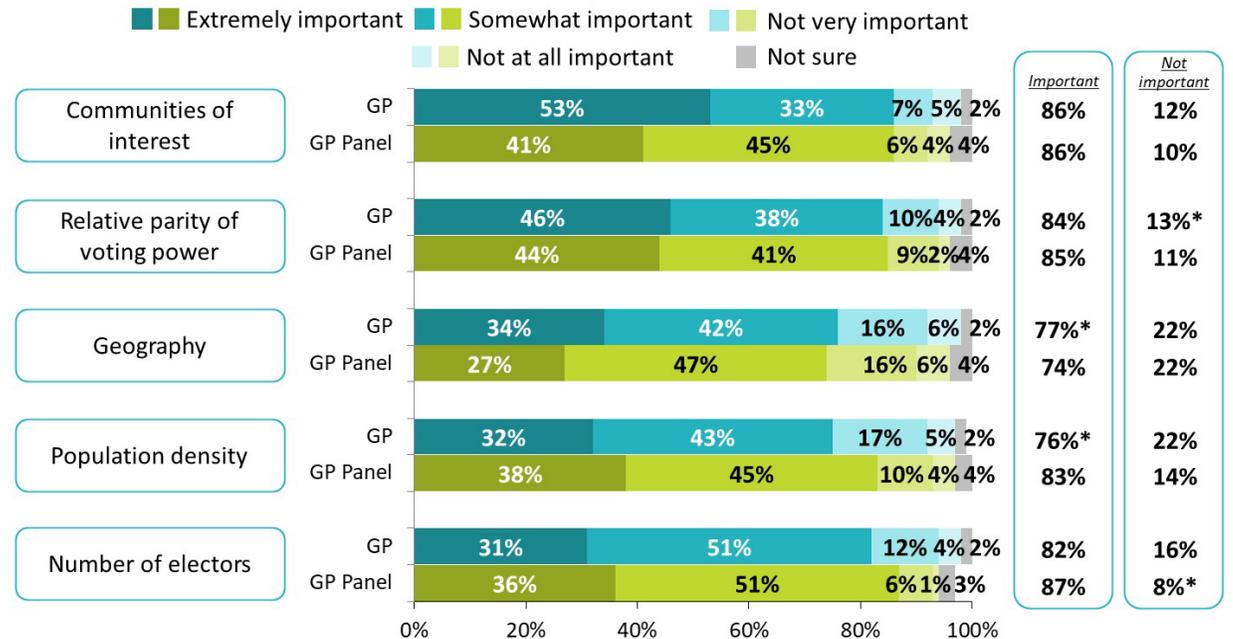


Q.C1: With this additional information, to what extent do you agree or disagree that this structure of governance can adequately represent residents? \*Due to rounding.

Communities of interest and relative parity of voting power are of highest importance to residents.

Councillors feel the criteria need further definition, but deem communities of interest and geography to be most important.

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



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



Methodology:



Online surveys

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

Existing Knowledge

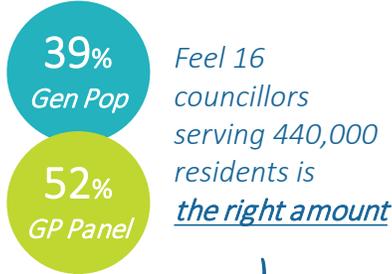


Aware of the Council's Responsibilities

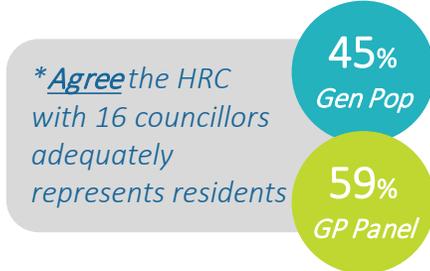
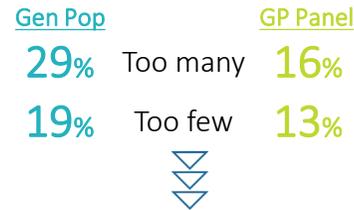
Gen Pop		GP Panel
97%	Garbage collection	96%
97%	Municipal infrastructure	95%
97%	Community & recreation centres	95%
97%	Public transit	94%
96%	Fire services	91%
95%	Police	91%
92%	Land use planning	91%
91%	Traffic signals	87%
90%	Public library funding	86%
67%	Diversity & inclusion services	53%

Halifax Regional Council Structure

Unaided Views

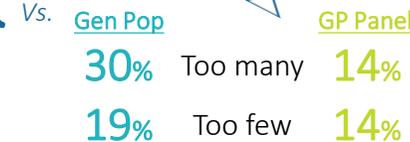
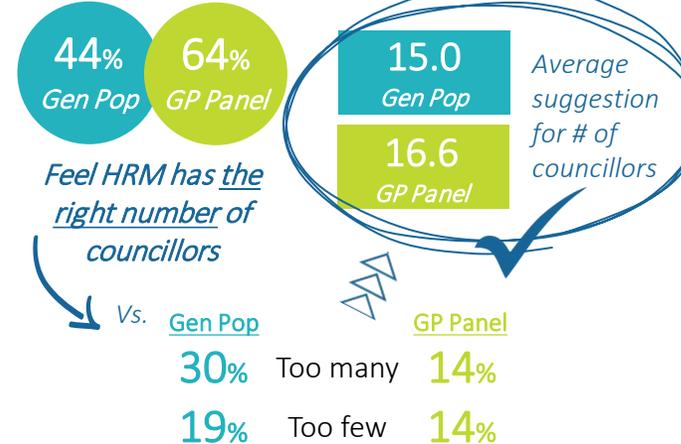
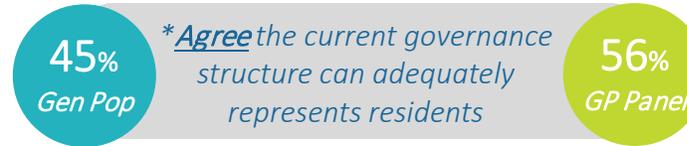


Vs.



Aided Views

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



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

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

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

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



# NARRATIVE RESEARCH

Every insight tells a story.