

Council Size Comparison

Stantec has benchmarked Nova Scotia council sizes for several past boundary reviews. Clare compares to other rural municipalities in Nova Scotia (i.e., counties and municipal districts). Council size can be compared based on **population**, **land area**, and **cost**.

Compared to What?

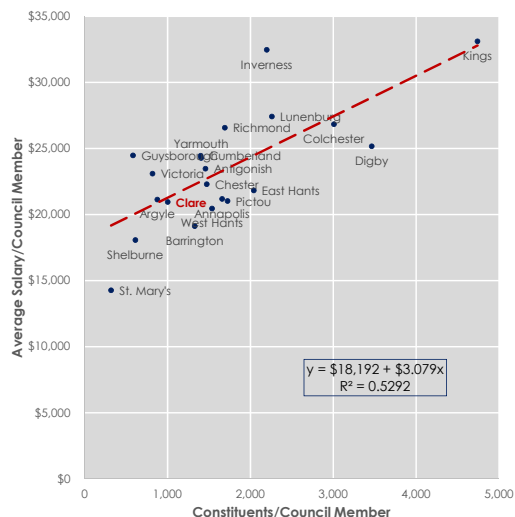
Clare has had **eight councillors** for many years. Ten of 21 rural municipalities have larger councils. On a per capita basis, **Clare councillors serve 1,002 constituents** on average, which **ranks 16th**. By land area, they average **106.6 square kilometres** of territory within each district, which is **20th or the second smallest**.

Rural Municipality	Area (km2)	Population	Mayor	Councillors	Total	Pop./Rep	Rank	km ² /Rep	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	145.0	14
Argyle	1,528.00	7,899	No	9	9	878	17	169.8	12
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	13
Clare	852.8	8,018	No	8	8	1,002	16	106.6	20
Colchester	3,572.70	36,091	Yes	11	12	3,008	2	297.7	5
Cumberland	4,246.00	18,197	No	13	13	1,400	14	353.0	3
Digby	1,659.30	7,107	No	5	5	1,421	12	331.9	4
East Hants	1,798.60	22,453	No	11	11	2,041	5	138.4	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	190.5	11
Lunenburg	1,766.90	24,863	Yes	10	11	2,260	3	135.9	17
Pictou	2,798.40	20,692	No	12	12	1,724	6	199.9	10
Richmond	1,244.20	8,458	No	5	5	1,692	7	124.4	19
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	138.0	16
Yarmouth	586.1	9,845	No	7	7	1,406	13	83.7	21
TOTALS	42,312.80	307,120		190	192	1,600		220.4	

What Does it Cost?

Staff with CBC Radio recently compiled data on salaries paid to municipal councillors in Nova Scotia that was released to complement a series of reports on the challenges faced by our municipalities. According to CBC's numbers, the **average salary paid to council members in Clare ranks 17th among 21 rural municipalities**. On a pay per constituent basis, though, Clare's councillors receive about 50% more than the average rural council member.

To see how pay and constituents served correlate across the province we plotted the 21 rural municipalities on the graph to the right. As we would expect, compensation increases with constituents served but not on a direct one to one basis. The equation of the red line that best fits the data plotted in the chart tells us that we would expect a "normal" municipality to pay \$18,912 plus \$3.08 per constituent served. **For Clare, with 1,002 constituents per council member, the equation gives us \$18,192 + \$3,085 or \$21,277 per member, which is \$331 more than the average collected by Clare's council members (\$20,946).** The value R², by the way, tells us that 53% of the variation in council salaries is explained by the number of constituents each council member serves.



Municipality of the District of Clare
Boundary Review

Council Size Survey

Stantec posted a brief questionnaire survey online on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, and closed it at midnight on Sunday, January 14, 2018. Over the course of 25 days, **512 Clare residents responded**. Most were familiar with local municipal politics; **88.9% voted in at least one of the past three municipal elections** in Clare. They were drawn **from 34 different communities** within the municipality and **from all age groups** 15 years and older.

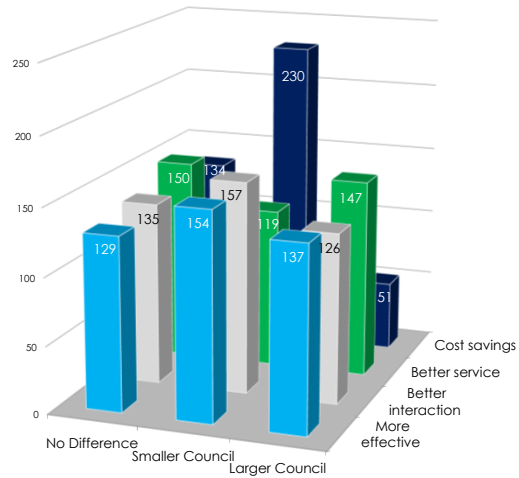
What Would You Expect?

We wanted to know what differences you thought council size could make. We asked whether you 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 indicate:

- The 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.

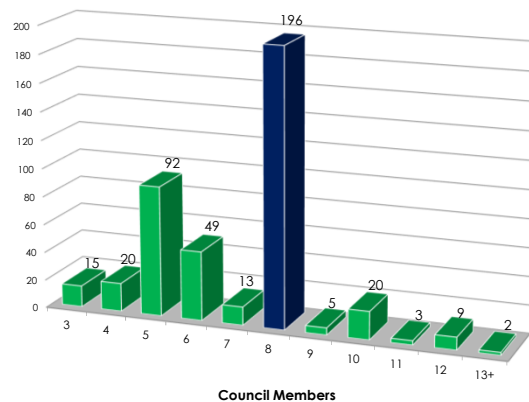
For each feature, roughly a third of respondents feel that the size of council will make no difference.



What Size Would You Like?

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. 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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What You Need to Know

We know the first two panels are pretty technical, so we thought the straight numbers would be helpful.

How Does Clare Compare?

The Municipality of the District of Clare has had an **8-member Council** since at least 1992

Of **21 rural municipal councils** in Nova Scotia, **10 are larger** than Clare's, **8 are smaller**, and **2 are the same**

Councillors in Clare **serve 1,002 constituents** on average, which **ranks 16th** among 21 rural municipalities

The average municipal district in Clare **covers 106.6 km²**, which is the 20th largest or **second smallest**

According to CBC Radio, the **average salary** of Clare's Council members is **\$20,946** per year, which ranks **17th** relative to the other 21 rural municipalities

We calculate that **Clare salaries are \$331 less than we would expect** based on our statistical analysis of rural salaries paid on a per constituent basis

What Did You Say?

512 Clare residents responded to our survey

Respondents were **from 34 communities** in Clare and included members of **every age group** from 15 to over 85 years of age

36.7% believe a **larger council will be more effective** than a smaller council (32.6%)

37.6% feel councillors will **interact better in a small council** than a larger one (32.6%)

35.3% expect **better service from a large council** than a smaller council (28.6%)

55.4% expect that **a smaller council will save money** relative to a larger one (12.3%)

About one-third of respondents feel that the size of council **will make no difference**

Of 424 people who told us what council size they would prefer, **196 (46.2%) favour eight**, the current number of Council members

92 (21.7%) favour a council of five and **189 (44.6%) would prefer seven or less**

235 (55.4%) prefer a council the same size or larger than the current council serving Clare



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