



Council Size Increase Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *What is View Royal Council thinking about doing?*

A: Council wants to hear input from you about whether it should increase council size from 5 to 7 members.

Q: *What are the pros and cons of increasing council size?*

A: A larger council could provide:

- more access to elected officials
- greater representation for an increasing population
- broader, more diverse perspectives and skillsets in the decision-making process for the complex issues facing council both locally and regionally
- opportunities for those with full-time jobs to run for office as “many hands make for light work” – said another way, work on the 25 external committees and boards that View Royal’s elected officials are asked to serve on would be distributed amongst more people meaning fewer hours required for those commitments outside of council meetings
- more candidates on the ballot for residents to choose from

Keeping council size at 5 would see:

- more concentrated representation as the population continues to grow with no additional representation
- a continuation of the same financial impact to taxpayers

Q: *What does View Royal have in place now for its council?*

A: A mayor and 4 councillors. This is the short answer!

Q: *How was council size decided in the first place?*

A: Council size is generally set by a municipality’s population.

When View Royal incorporated in 1988, it had just under 5,000 people.

Based on Provincial legislation (the *Local Government Act*, section 10) that sets out the following classification or naming system:

“Village” if < 2,500 population

“Town” if 2,500 to 5,000 population

“City” if > 5,000 population

“District municipality” if land area is greater than 800 hectares and average population density < 5 people per hectare



(though the Lieutenant Governor in Council may incorporate a municipality into a different classification if it is considered to be in the public interest)

...View Royal was classified as a “town” based on its population at the time.

Other Provincial legislation, the *Community Charter* (section 118), sets out council size:

City or district > 50,000 population = mayor and 8 councillors

City or district < 50,000 population = mayor and 6 councillors

Town or village = mayor and 4 councillors

... and so with a “town” classification, based on its 2,500 to 5,000 population, View Royal was assigned to have a mayor and 4 councillors when it was incorporated. This is the structure that is in place still today, 33 years later. This is the long answer!



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Q: *What is View Royal's population?*

A: Census Canada 2016 information lists View Royal's population as 10,408 though this is thought to be closer to 11,000 today or even higher with the Province estimating the Town's population to be 11,829 in 2020.

If it was to incorporate today, View Royal's size would mean that it would have a mayor and 6 councillors and be classified as a city.

Q: *What is the process to increase council size?*

A: There are two ways a council could increase council size:

1. by bylaw as described in Section 118 of the *Community Charter*, this is the more cost affordable option; or
2. undertake a reclassification from "town" to "city" which automatically triggers an increase in council size as described in Section 11 of the *Local Government Act*. A reclassification would require an Assent Voting (referendum) or alternative approval process (AAP).

BUT Council is only interested in exploring an increase in council size, NOT in reclassifying to become a city.

Q: *How much would it cost me as a taxpayer if we do get a seven-member council?*

A: A Council member gets approximately \$22,150 in remuneration (or pay) and for conferences/education each year so two additional council members would mean an increase to the Town's operating budget of about \$44,300.

There would also be one-time costs to change the Council Chambers – the space where council meets. This is estimated to cost \$50,000.

Q: *Do other municipalities in the Capital Regional District have seven-member councils?*

A: Yes. Most municipalities in the Capital Regional District have 7 members on their councils. The only exceptions are the District of Saanich (population 114,148) and the City of Victoria (population 85,792) – both of which have 9-member councils – and the District of Metchosin with 5 members (population 4,708). Across British Columbia, municipal council sizes vary from 5 to 11 elected representatives.

Q: *If Council passes a bylaw to increase council size, when would it take effect?*

A: If a bylaw is adopted by Council at least six months before the next general local election – set for October 2022 – people would be voting for six councillors and one mayor in that election.

Want to learn more or wish to come out and share your thoughts?

You are invited to an **Open House**:

When: Monday, November 15, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: View Royal Town Hall Council Chambers, 45 View Royal Avenue

COVID-19 measures will be in place including a capacity limit of 35 people at one time in Council Chambers, hand sanitizing areas, and face masks are required to be worn.

Unable to attend the Open House? Join the live webcast (www.viewroyal.ca) to participate in the November 16, 2021 Council meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. when this topic is on the agenda.

Questions? Please contact Sarah Jones:

250-479-6800 or info@viewroyal.ca