



**METROPOLITAN HALIFAX
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Strong Business. Strong Community. Since 1750.

May 24, 2002

District Boundary Advisory Committee
Municipal Clerk's Office
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5
Attention: Sandra Shute

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

RE: HRM BOUNDARY REVIEW

Thank you for contacting the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce for input on the district boundary review that is currently underway in HRM. The Chamber of Commerce is a best-practice business advocacy organization that continuously strives to make metro Halifax an even better place in which to live, work and play.

It is our understanding that the Municipal Government Act requires that the Municipality conduct a study of the number and boundaries of polling districts in the municipality, their fairness and reasonableness and the number of councilors. The Chamber recognizes the necessity of completing such a review to ensure parity among electoral districts and that the electoral districts represent a common community of interest.

In the undertaking of such a review, the Chamber of Commerce believes that HRM must take into consideration the following factors:

1. Is the existing structure with 23 councilors the most efficient and effective governance structure? If not, how could it be improved?
2. What is the role of community councils as a part of the governance structure and should this be reviewed at the same time as the boundaries?
3. What is the appropriate average population per district or electorate per district, giving due consideration to not only the balance between districts, but also the overall functioning of council? What have similar and larger municipalities done?

In an environment of fiscal restraint, it is our strong belief that committee recommendations must be carefully considered, especially with regard to potential increases in the cost of administering the Municipality. The Chamber believes that absent any analysis indicating otherwise, a smaller Council would generally be more effective in decision making, and more cost efficient, without placing at risk parity among electoral districts. We look forward to reviewing the final report of the Committee.

Sincerely,

(signed)
Valerie Payn,
President