

How Many Councillors?

The City of Guelph currently has 12 councillors. How many councillors should the City have?

Composition of Council: How many councillors are appropriate?

- The [Municipal Act, 2001 s. 217 \(1\)](#) authorizes a local municipality “to change the composition of its council” subject to five enumerated rules, the most relevant of which is: “There shall be a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the head of council.” A bylaw adopted by Council to implement this authority is not open to appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)
- Despite this authority granted to councils under the [Municipal Act](#), there are no clear principles, standards or formulas to apply in determining the appropriate size of a municipal council. A municipality must have at least four councillors; there is no maximum set in the act or any provincial regulation. The composition of local councils in Ontario varies widely and is entirely a matter for each municipal council to decide
- Deciding on an appropriate number of councillors is a balancing act. A large number of councillors can slow down and complicate the decision-making process on the floor of council when every councillor feels a need to weigh in on every discussion. However, councils need to be large enough to ensure that all of the community’s interests are represented on council. A council should be large enough to represent the diversity of the community in terms of its neighbourhoods, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic interests and history
- Table 1 provides information about the number of councillors for all Ontario single-tier municipalities in the 100,000 to 200,000 population range. The table illustrates the above comments about there being no guiding principles that govern the number of councillors and wards. For example, the largest municipality by population (Sudbury) has a smaller council than the smallest municipality in the category (Chatham-Kent)

Table 1
 Composition of Council
 Ontario Single-Tier Municipalities
 Population 100,000 to 200,000

Municipality	Population (2016)	Composition of Council (excluding the Mayor)
Sudbury	161,531	12
Barrie	141,434	10
Guelph	131,794	12
Kingston	123,798	12
Thunder Bay	107,909	12
Chatham-Kent	101,647	17

- This information provides little direct guidance to Guelph but provides a reassurance that the City currently falls in the middle of the range and if it increases or decreases the number of councillors or wards slightly it would remain within that range.