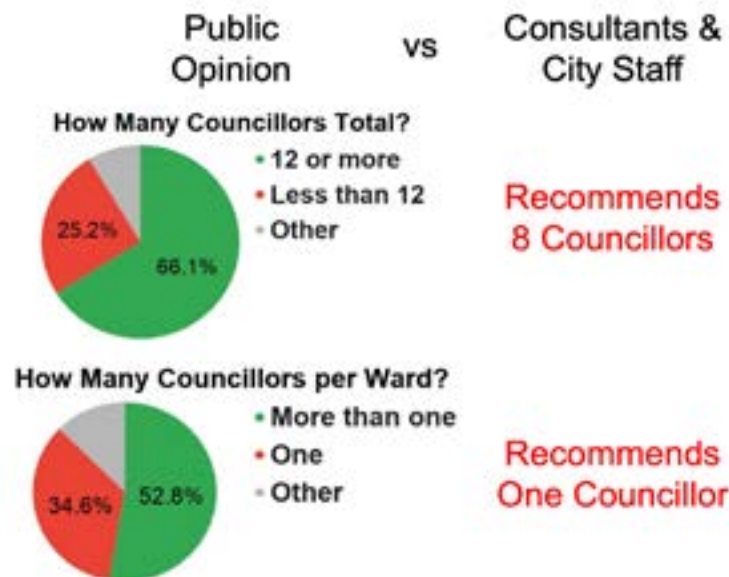


Keep dual member wards, Keep 12 or more councillors

I am writing to request that council reject the consultant's recommendation, primarily because their recommendations DO NOT reflect the will of the citizens of Guelph.

As the consultants have said in their report, the level of engagement in Guelph, on this topic, has been far greater than other communities, and the participation rate has exceeded expectations. This high level of engagement and participation, in spite of the impediments due to a global pandemic, in my opinion, add additional weight to the preferences that were expressed.

The consultants reported that 52.6% of those who responded to the survey expressed a desire to keep dual member wards. Only 34.9% favoured changing to single member wards. 66.1% wanted to keep 12 Councillors, or add more. Only 25.2% wanted a reduction in city Councillors.



In spite of this clear desire to keep dual member wards, and retain 12 or more councillors, the consultants recommended the opposite of that, single member wards and a reduction of the size of council. Having recommended a course that was different from the public will, I expected a strong argument for deviating from it, but what I found was rather thin gruel. From the report; "The views of Councillors and staff who work in the system, however, as well as experience elsewhere, lead us to conclude that one-member wards would solve issues that frequently arise both between the two Councillors in the same ward and the working arrangements with City staff." This sounds like "The high level of citizen engagement and representation that Guelph enjoys goes beyond what most people expect and is inconvenient for the embedded professionals who have to deal with them."

Changing the Council Composition and/or voting system is basically writing the constitution of the city. A government has no legitimacy without the consent of the governed. We have asked what the people want, they have delivered a clear answer. The way forward is clear. Respect the will of the people.