

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Corporate Services
Date	Monday, June 21, 2021
Subject	City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review, Phase Two – Final Report

Recommendation

The following recommendations have been provided by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd., the independent third-party expert contracted by the City of Guelph to complete the City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review:

1. That Guelph City Council be comprised of eight councillors plus the Mayor.
2. That one City councillor be elected per ward.
3. That the employment status of City Councillors be full-time.
4. That the revised City of Guelph ward boundaries included as Attachment-3 to the City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review, Phase Two – Final Report, dated June 21, 2021, be approved, to take effect for the 2022 municipal election.

The following recommendations have been provided by City staff:

5. That the Terms of Reference for the City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee, included as Attachment-4 to the City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review, Phase Two – Final Report, dated June 21, 2021, be approved.
6. That the total costs associated with a change in City Council composition and employment status be referred to the City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee to report back to City Council with its final recommendations in the second quarter of 2022.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To present the findings of the independent review on phase two of the City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review project and to make a final recommendation regarding City Council composition, employment status and ward boundary design.

Key Findings

The independent team reviewing City Council composition, employment status and ward boundaries is recommending the following:

- That the number of City Councillors be reduced to eight.

- That the number of City Councillors elected per ward be reduced to one.
- That the employment status of City Councillors be changed to full-time.
- That the City's ward boundaries be revised to consist of eight wards.

Financial Implications

Final recommendations from the City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee regarding salary and benefits for the Mayor and City Councillors, and the role and number of support staff for City Council, will be brought forward in the second quarter (Q2) of 2022. The final costs of a change in City Council composition will be determined by City Council at that time. The cost estimates below are provided only to inform City Council's decisions regarding composition and are not final budgetary amounts.

A shift to eight full-time City Councillors would cost an estimated \$212,700 in additional annual salary and benefits above the \$578,300 currently provided to councillors.

Assuming that eight full-time City Councillors will require at least one additional administrative support staff person, in addition to the two-existing staff in the Mayor and City Council Office, the additional annual cost in salary and benefits for support staff would be an estimated \$90,350.

Providing offices, meeting space and furniture for eight full-time councillors in City Hall will cost an estimated \$198,000 - \$237,000 in one-time expenses.

The total cost of adopting the recommendations of Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. would be an estimated \$303,050 in additional salary and benefits annually as well as a one-time of \$198,000 - \$237,000 to provide offices and meetings spaces in City Hall.

Report

Background

The phase one report of the City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review, [the City Council Composition and Employment Status Review](#), was presented to City Council at the November 5, 2021 Special City Council meeting. At that meeting, [City Council directed staff](#) to support Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. in conducting additional rounds of community engagement, as part of the phase two ward boundary review, including the following:

- scenarios that include eight, 10 or 12 councillors
- the number of councillors elected per ward
- the employment status of councillors

Phase two of the project, the ward boundary review, was initiated immediately following the November 5, 2021 Special City Council meeting. Community engagement for phase two consisted of three rounds of consultation. Round one ran from January 4 to 22, 2021, round two ran from February 23 to March 14, 2021 and round three ran from April 6 to 20, 2021. The results of phase two of the project, including all supporting documents and community engagement results, are included in Attachment-1.

Final Options

Four final City Council composition and ward boundary options have been developed by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. These options are a result of feedback received through the multiple rounds of community engagement balanced with a neutral third-party professional assessment by the consulting team. All four options are viable and defensible at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) but do represent varying degrees of change from the existing ward structure. All four of the options deliver more effective representation than the current model that has existed without significant modification since 1990.

The final four options are outlined below:

- Option 5-1: 10 part-time councillors, 5 wards, 2 councillors per ward
- Option 6-1: 12 part-time councillors, 6 wards, 2 councillors per ward
- Option 6-2: 12 part-time councillors, 6 wards, 2 councillors per ward
- Option 8-1 (recommended): 8 full-time councillors, 8 wards, 1 councillor per ward

Of these four options, option 8-1 is the option recommended by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. If City Council wishes to retain twelve councillors elected in two-member wards, option 6-2 is the alternative recommended option by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd.

A full analysis of the various options, including the expert opinion of the consulting team and community engagement results, is included in Attachment-1.

If a revised ward boundary by-law is adopted at the June 23 meeting, there will be a 45-day period in which appeals to the OLT could be filed. [As per Section 222 \(8\) \(a\) of the Municipal Act](#), in the event of an appeal and OLT upholds or amends the by-law prior to January 1, 2022, or if there is no appeal, the revised ward boundaries would be in effect for the 2022 municipal election. If an appeal is received and no decision is issued by the OLT prior to January 1, 2022, then the current City Council composition and ward boundaries will remain in effect for the 2022 election.

Financial Implications

Councillor Remuneration

The pay and benefits of City Councillors and the Mayor is set by City Council ([as per Section 283 of the Municipal Act](#)) based on the advice of the [City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee](#). Staff are seeking approval of revised Terms of Reference for the City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee, which are included as Attachment-4 to this report. The City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee will be established in November 2021, following which it will begin work to review salary, benefits and staff support for City Council based on the composition model approved by City Council.

The information provided below is an estimate to ensure the approximate cost of decisions related to City Council composition are known. Total costs associated with a change in City Council composition and employment status should be referred to the City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee, to report back to City Council as part of its final recommendations regarding salary, benefits and support staff prior to nomination period beginning on May 2, 2022.

A shift to eight full-time City Councillors would cost an estimated \$212,700 in additional salary and benefits above the \$578,300 currently provided to Guelph's 12 part-time City Councillors.

Current City Councillor salaries are \$41,528 plus \$6,700 in benefits. To estimate the cost of switching to full-time City Councillors, the salaries have been doubled to \$83,056 plus \$15,800 in benefits. These compensation amounts are estimates only at this time.

The additional cost in benefits would align the benefits package offered to the Mayor with those of City Councillors.

Support Staff and Considerations

Full-time City Councillors will require support staff. City Council support staff would fulfill an important role in supporting full-time councillors including scheduling, supporting meeting logistics and booking of travel and accommodations at conferences and education sessions. Customer service, through the ongoing implementation of the [Service Simplified strategy](#) and the [Working Together for our Future](#) priority area of the Strategic Plan, would continue to be supported, delivered and evolved through existing service delivery teams in City departments.

The role and number of support staff has a significant impact on total cost associated with changes to City Council composition. The City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee will provide a recommendation to City Council on the appropriate role and number of support staff in Q2 2022.

Assuming that eight full-time City Councillors will require at least one additional administrative support staff person, in addition to the two-existing staff in the Mayor and Council Office, the additional annual cost in salaries and benefits would be \$90,350. Additional support staff, or support staff in roles with higher salaries than administrative assistants, would add to this cost.

City Facility and Office Space Considerations

It is assumed that full-time councillors would need office space to meet the requirements of their position and host small meetings within the office. Councillors would also likely require two to three meeting rooms for their use to meet with constituents or in larger groups. The meeting rooms have been assumed to be mixed between formal and informal settings with space for six to eight people. Space for support staff has also been contemplated, located in a common area with cubicles. At a maximum, it is expected that approximately 278 - 418 square meters of space would be required for the dedicated use of councillors and support staff. The layout and configuration of office space as described above will need to be reviewed against the ever-changing considerations of workspaces in a post-COVID environment, including but not limited to telecommuting, hoteling space, shared/co-located workspaces and associated cost implications.

Assuming changes in the next two years allow space to be found in City Hall (due to departmental movements, telecommuting, hoteling space, shared/co-located workspaces) a one-time cost ranging from \$198,000 - \$237,000 would be required depending on which of the above-mentioned formats or models are identified as the best option and put into place.

Consultations

A robust and City-wide community engagement plan, developed by leaders in civic engagement from ICA Associates Inc., in consultation with and supported by the City's community engagement team, was implemented for both phase one and phase two of this project. The details of that plan, as well as the results and feedback gathered from the community, are included in Attachment-1.

Statistics regarding participation in community engagement for the entire project are included below.

Media Coverage

1. 53 stories in local and regional media outlets.

haveyoursay.guelph.ca

1. 1,477 surveys completed.
2. 4,822 unique visits to the page.
3. 3,184 total downloads of the project documents.

Project Website

1. 2,165 unique page views and 4,338 if you count repeat visitors.

Social Media

1. 154,356 reached on Twitter.
2. 104,076 reached on Facebook.

Virtual Town Halls

1. Six virtual town halls were held with a total of 168 participants.
2. The virtual town hall recordings on Facebook have over 7,000 views.

Focus Group

1. Seven volunteers were recruited from across the wards to participate in a small focus group to discuss survey results from the first round of engagement in phase two of the project.

Staff Consultations

The following staff were also consulted in the preparation of this report:

Mark Ellis, General Manager, Human Resources

Ian Scott, Manager, Facility Design and Construction

Strategic Plan Alignment

This project aligns with the strategic plan priority of Working Together for Our Future by ensuring that Guelph's governance model effectively represents the needs of residents and the Corporation of the City of Guelph.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review – Phase Two Report

Attachment-2 Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. City Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review – Phase Two Presentation

Attachment-3 Revised City of Guelph Ward Boundaries (Option 8-1)

Attachment-4 City Council Remuneration and Support Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Report Author

Lindsay Cline, Council and Committee Coordinator

This report was approved by:

Stephen O'Brien
General Manager, City Clerk's Office/City Clerk
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 5644
stephen.obrien@guelph.ca

This report was recommended by:

Trevor Lee
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Corporate Services
519-822-1260 extension 2281
trevor.lee@guelph.ca