

To Guelph City Council,

The final public survey asked participants to rank in order of preference 4 options:

- 8 single member wards
- 5 dual member wards
- 6 dual member wards (version 1)
- 6 dual member wards (version 2)

This is analogous to asking a group to pick their favourite colour:

- red
- green
- dark blue
- slightly darker blue

When presented this way I hope it is obvious that the question is poorly constructed. Those who like dark blue are having their vote split among similar (if not practically identical) options. The question is disadvantageous to those who prefer dark blue. A fairly constructed question would not split the blue vote by design but instead put them together as a shared voting block. The final four options should never have been presented to the public in this way. It is shocking that no one identified and corrected this egregious error in methodology and design.

Even the authors of this report acknowledge this error! As per the Final Report from Watson and Associates (p.43):

"As shown in figure 29, 35% of respondents identified option 8-1 as their most preferred option (1st ranking), compared to 31% for option 6-2, 21% for option 6-1 and 14% for option 5-1. Having said that, as a first choice the eight-ward option ranked behind the combined preference for the two six-ward options (35% compared to 52%). Further, the reaction to option 8-1 was somewhat polarized, with a relatively small share of respondents choosing it as their second or third choice while a relatively large share identified it as their fourth (least preferred) choice. Due to the combined preference for the six-ward options and the polarized nature of responses for option 8-1, on an average ranked basis, option 6-2 ranks the highest (2.11) followed by option 6-1 (2.43), option 8-1 (2.56) and option 5-1 (2.77), as illustrated in figure 30."

So if the consultants accept that 52% of respondents' first choice is 6 dual member wards, how do they justify recommending 8 single member wards which only has 35% support? Particularly in light of the fact that opinion is polarized on the 8 ward option whereas it is not on the 6 ward option? Particularly when option 6-2 enjoys the highest average ranking by their own analysis? Why are the consultants ignoring their own results in favour of the 8 ward option? They do not provide any plausible rationale for why the 8 ward option might be superior, let alone any evidence or references (case studies, academic papers, etc.). In fact the only relevant reference I can find (p.12) is to the legal case "Reference re: Provincial

Electoral Boundaries(Sask.) (1991) (the Carter case)" where the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that under the Charter Rights and Freedoms, citizens have a right to "effective representation" meaning "they are entitled to have a voice in the deliberations of government through their elected representatives". The 8 ward model does not increase effective representation or the ability of citizens to have a voice via their elected representatives. In fact there is a strong argument that the 8 ward model REDUCES effective representation. Less listeners means less chance of your voice being heard. Less representatives means less representation and less diversity of representation. (I notice that there is NO meaningful discussion about the impact of the proposed changes on the diversity of candidates and/or elected council. How do the consultants justify completely ignoring this important factor?) Also, the move from dual member wards to single member wards means more "wasted votes" (votes that fail to elect anyone - see attached spreadsheet for an example). I wrote to both the Council and the Consultants about this in early January but received no acknowledgment of the problem let alone any attempt to address it. I don't understand how this critical issue can be ignored. Increasing the number of votes that fail to elect anyone would seem to be a clear reduction in effective representation. I am no legal expert but it seems to me that moving from 12 dual member wards to 8 single member wards could expose the City to a Charter Challenge in addition to an LPAT appeal.

I urge you to ignore the recommendation to pay more for less democracy. Instead embrace the public will and the actual results of the consultants own analysis. Stick with 6 dual member wards. The compensation question can be addressed later by the appropriate body as I fully acknowledge that many councillors, many City staff and many citizens (myself included) feel the Councillor position demands more time and effort than it did back in the 90's when the current council scheme was implemented. They should be compensated appropriately and therefore a raise is called for. The full-time vs part-time status question is kind of irrelevant as there is no viable mechanism to monitor and enforce this expectation beyond what we already have: the ballot box.

Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Kevin Bowman
Chair
Democracy Guelph

WARD 1			WARD 2			WARD 3						
Gibson	3,033	Effective Votes %	Gordon	3,009	Effective Votes %	Allt	3,187	Effective Votes %				
Bell	2,631	49.57	Goller	2,728	58.33	Hofland	2,764	68.60				
Mann	1,898	Wasted Votes %	Knowles	1,591	Wasted Votes %	Sheridan	1,319	Wasted Votes %				
Downey	1,748	50.43	Fair	1,341	41.67	Dodge	1,054	31.40				
Killingsworth	1,057	SW Effective Votes %	Thring	996	SW Effective Votes %	Petric	351	SW Effective Votes %				
Gernon	737	26.54	Sharma	170	30.59	TOTAL	8,675	36.74				
Thornton	172	SW Wasted Votes %	TOTAL	9,835	SW Wasted Votes %			SW Wasted Votes %				
Heffernan	151	73.46						63.26				
TOTAL	11,427											
												Source:
												City of Guelph 2018 Elections Results Website
WARD 4			WARD 5			WARD 6						
Billings	1,330	Effective Votes %	Piper	3,719	Effective Votes %	O-Rourke	4,133	Effective Votes %				
Salisbury	1,702	39.12	Downer	3,525	80.44	MacKinnon	3,137	64.32				
Arora	1,501	Wasted Votes %	Green	1,762	Wasted Votes %	Cooper	2,012	Wasted Votes %				
Hamtak	945	60.88	TOTAL	9,006	19.56	Khurana	870	35.68				
Saunders	877	SW Effective Votes %			SW Effective Votes %	Arora	745	SW Effective Votes %				
Clark	702	17.16			41.29	Burcher	406	36.57				
Ridder	694	SW Wasted Votes %			SW Wasted Votes %	TOTAL	11,303	SW Wasted Votes %				
TOTAL	7,751	82.84			58.71			63.43				
Definitions:	"Effective Votes" - the percentage of total votes cast for a winning candidate, in other words the percentage of votes that elected someone											
	"Wasted Votes" - the percentage of total votes cast for non-winning candidates, in others words the percentage of votes that elected no one											
	"SW Effective Votes" - the percentage of total votes cast for a winning candidate in a single winner race, in other words the percentage of votes that elected someone											
	"SW Wasted Votes" - the percentage of total votes cast for non-winning candidates in a single winner race, in other words the percentage of votes that elected no one											
Assumptions:	Votes/ballots would be distributed among candidates in the same proportions under a single winner scenario as under the two-winner scenario											
	(if you prefer to compare our results to actual single winner jurisdictions please do - the results are essentially the same)											
Conclusions:	Single winner races ALWAYS have less Effective Votes and ALWAYS have more Wasted Votes leading to more voters NOT seeing someone they voted for elected.											
	This inevitably leads to voter dissatisfaction/apathy/cynicism and lower turnout/engagement.											
	Moving from multi-winner wards to single winner wards would not increase accountability or enhance democracy. It would do the opposite.											
	In fact, we should seriously consider moving to 4 wards with three winners each. This would reduce Wasted Votes even more leading to more voters seeing winners they voted for and higher voter satisfaction.											
	If Guelph keeps multi-winner wards and adopts Ranked Ballots, Wasted Votes will be further reduced and voter satisfaction will increase.											
	Ranked Ballots are no longer an option at this time due to Provincial gov but I have no doubt they will be back as soon as the Liberals or NDP form government.											

On June 21st Guelph City Council will consider a proposal from consultants to shrink City Council to 8 full-time councillors. If you are a resident of Guelph I urge you to email clerks@guelph.ca to have your message included in the official public record. You can also email your Councillor and the Mayor at councillorsandmayor@guelph.ca.

For the past 30 years or so Guelph has had 12 part-time city councillors. During that time the population of Guelph has increased from roughly 88,000 to 135,000, an almost 50% increase. As such the demands on the 12 councillors have increased significantly and any councillor will tell you it is no longer a part-time commitment that is required to do the job properly. It is expected (and legislatively required by the province) that Guelph grows another 50% to about 200,000 by 2050. These facts among others required the City to conduct a [Council Review](#).

The [final report](#) from Watson and Associates (the consultants hired by the City to conduct this Council Review) recommends a transition to 8 full-time councillors. This is counter-intuitive at first glance to say the least and recklessly irresponsible after the slightest due diligence to be blunt. To adopt such a proposal would be to consciously choose to reduce democracy and accountability to the public at an increased financial cost.

Year	Population	Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Councillors	Population per FTE Councillor
1990	88,000	12 x 0.5 = 6	14,666
2021 (present)	135,000	12 x 0.75 (realistic estimate) = 9	15,000
2022 (next election)	135,000	8	16,875
2050	200,000	8	25,000

City Councillors are the only City leadership that can be hired and fired by the public (apart from the Mayor) and even then only every 4 years during an election. Reducing the number of elected leaders representing the public is also reducing the number of people accountable to the public when the population is growing and is therefore anti-democratic. Period. It will inevitably lead to a City that is more bureaucratic and less responsive to the needs of the people. With so many more voices and fewer listeners, it will be increasingly difficult for constituents to get a hold of their representatives let alone have a meaningful conversation with them. The recommendation is particularly galling when you account for the fact that according to the consultants own report, over three rounds of public consultations, a clear majority of those surveyed said they did NOT want to shrink the size of council.

A clear majority also said they wanted to keep the current 2 councillors per ward arrangement but the consultant's recommendation ignores that as well. They provide no plausible rationale (let alone evidence) that switching to one councillor per ward would be an improvement. Perhaps that is because if you crunch the numbers it turns out that one councillor per ward is objectively worse than 2 councillors per ward. Local citizen group [Democracy Guelph](#) did the math and wrote to City Council to point out that moving to one councillor per ward would increase the number of "[wasted votes](#)" (votes that fail to elect anyone). So not only

will Guelphites have LESS people representing them at City Hall but those leaders will be chosen by a SMALLER portion of the population. What could be more anti-democratic than changing the election system such that MORE ballots count for NOTHING?

The cherry on this terrible cake? These changes are going to cost MORE than what we pay now. That's right, pay more and get less. At present the 12 part-time councillors are collectively paid \$480,000 NOT including benefits and expenses. The consultants estimate that 8 full-time councillors would be collectively paid \$640,000 NOT including benefits and expenses.

But wait, there's more! This smaller council will require staff support so the consultants propose hiring a staff person at an estimated \$90,350/year.

Annual Budget	Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Councillors	Cost per FTE Councillor
\$480,000+	12 x 0.75 (realistic estimate) = 9	\$53,333+
\$730,350+	8	\$91,294+

But wait, there's even more!

- Councillors currently do not have dedicated office space at City Hall but full-time councillors would require this so tack on an estimated, one-time expense of \$198,000-\$237,000 for renovations.
- Councillors currently do not have any pension or retirement provisions and it is likely that full-time councillors will expect this so tack on another perpetual expense as yet to be determined.

It is frankly offensive that the citizens of Guelph have paid tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of dollars for a consultant to ignore public input and then suggest to those same citizens that they pay more for less. Needless to say, the City Council should reject the consultant's proposal and maybe even demand their (our) money back. If you want to express your thoughts I urge you to send an email to clerks@guelph.ca and/or councillorsandmayor@guelph.ca.

Kevin Bowman
 Chairperson for [Democracy Guelph](http://DemocracyGuelph.com)