



City of Guelph Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review Phase 1 Study Findings and Recommendations

Council Presentation
NOVEMBER 5, 2020

Study Overview



- The Consultant Team: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with ICA Associates Inc. and Drs. David Siegel and Robert J. Williams.
- Retained by the City of Guelph in January 2020 to conduct a comprehensive Council Composition and Ward Boundary Review:
 - Phase 1 – Council Composition and Employment Status Review
 - Phase 2 – Ward Boundary Review

Phase 1 – Key Questions to Address



- How many Councillors are appropriate?
- Should Councillors continue to be elected in wards or city-wide?
- If so, how many Councillors should be elected in each ward?
- Would the City of Guelph benefit from having City Councillors who could devote themselves full-time to their Council responsibilities or should they remain part-time?

Public Engagement



- Phase 1 engagement and consultation significantly exceeded expectations. (Target 300+ citizens providing detailed input).
- 670 citizens shared thoughtful, detailed insights in a survey, generating thousands of data points. Many more visited the site and joined a webinar to learn about the project.
- Methodology: Five key questions were closed-ended and mandatory. Optional follow-up questions allowed respondents to explain their reasoning. Most did.
- Respondents' views and ideas were considered and inform the Consultant Team's recommendations to Council.

How many Councillors should sit on the Council?



- Council has the legislative authority to change the composition of council: *Municipal Act, 2001* s. 217 (1).
- No clear principles, standards, or formulas to apply in determining the appropriate size of a municipal council (see Phase 1 Report).
- Appropriate number of Councillors “a balancing act”: impact on Council decision-making, representation, costs, population growth.

Elections by Wards or City-Wide?



- Council has the legislative authority “to divide or redivide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards” through a by-law: *Municipal Act, 2001* s. 222 (1) - subject to appeal to the LPAT.
- Each system has its own attributes and implications but wards more appropriate in large municipalities like Guelph.
- Some respondents endorsed a hybrid system but the Consultant Team concluded that two types of Councillors is unwarranted.

Ward Magnitude?



- Many Guelph residents only familiar with a two-member system.
- Guelph only city of its direct comparators with two-member wards.
- Many see advantages in having two Councillors to contact but shortcomings more numerous: contributes to a larger Council, increases the size of wards, leads to confusion and duplication when a constituent approaches both Councillors.
- One-member wards provide the flexibility to increase the number of wards while decreasing the number of Councillors.

Number of Wards?



- Question intersects with previous question(s).
- Fewer than six wards for a City the size of Guelph does not seem desirable.
- Adding (two-member) wards means adding two Councillors for each new ward which would increase the total size of Council.

Full-time or part-time?



- Only three municipalities in Ontario pay Councillors what would be considered a full-time wage (Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa) - all are single-tier municipalities.
- Fitting a regular full-time or a traditional part-time job with regular hours around the significant and irregular time commitments of a Councillor is very difficult.
- Many respondents understood that increasing demands on Councillors require them to be fully engaged: “They cannot do this part-time.”

Principles and Recommendations



- **Principle 1. The City of Guelph should have at least six wards.**
- **Principle 2. The City of Guelph should have no more than 12 Councillors.**

Principles and Recommendations



- **Recommendation 1. The City of Guelph should continue to use a ward system.**
- **Recommendation 2. The City of Guelph should switch to a system of one member per ward.**
- **Recommendation 3. The City of Guelph should have eight single-member wards.**
- **Recommendation 4. Councillors for the City of Guelph should be considered full-time Councillors and should be compensated accordingly.**

Phase 2 – Ward Boundary Review



- If Council determines in Phase 1 to maintain a ward system in Guelph, Phase 2 will see the Consultant Team develop alternative ward options for consideration by the community and Council
- Development of preliminary ward options Q1 2021
- Final Ward Options to Council Q2 2021
- Consultation and engagement activities will replicate the Phase 1 process unless public health regulations permit a return to live events



Questions?



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