

City of Oshawa Ward Boundary Review

Community Information Session

December, 2016

Study Overview

- ❑ February 2016 - Council approved Terms of Reference for a Ward Boundary Review (W.B.R.)
- ❑ Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., in association with Dr. Robert J. Williams, was retained to conduct the Review in August 2016
- ❑ Multi-phase assignment which will see work through fall 2016 and anticipated completion in spring 2017
- ❑ Project includes two rounds of public consultation – this being Round 1

What is a Ward Boundary Review?

- What is a W.B.R.?
 - A task designed to develop units of representation that reflect the distribution of the inhabitants of a municipality for electoral purposes

- Why are periodic W.B.R.s important?
 - Electoral arrangements need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that representation remains consistent with democratic values

Context

- Present composition of Oshawa City Council:
 - Mayor
 - Seven Regional and City Councillors
 - Three City Councillors
 - Total = 11

- All elected at-large in three separate ballots

- Oshawa has previously had a ward-based system – most recently from 1985 to 2006

Context (Cont'd)

- ❑ Since 2006 – last time City had ward-based system – Oshawa has seen growth and shifts in its population
- ❑ Over the past decade, Oshawa's population has increased by approximately 11%
- ❑ Over the next decade, Oshawa is anticipated to see moderate population growth
- ❑ Important that the ward boundary structure reflects the changing nature of the City



Context (Cont'd)

□ *Municipal Act*

- Section 217 authorizes Council to establish the number of Councillors and to determine whether they “shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.”
- Section 222 (1) authorizes a municipality “to divide or redivide the municipality into wards or to dissolve the existing wards.”

Why a Ward Boundary Review Now?

□ Two factors:

1. Request by Durham Regional Council (*Municipal Act, s 218*) to permit a reduction in the number of Oshawa Regional Councillors from 7 to 5
2. Direction by Council to City staff to return to the election of all members of Council in wards, following the results of a question placed on the 2014 municipal election ballot (*Municipal Act, s.222*)

Study Objectives

- The 2016-17 Oshawa W.B.R. is premised on the legitimate democratic expectation that municipal representation in Oshawa will be:
 - Effective
 - Equitable
 - An accurate reflection of the contemporary distribution of communities and people across the City

Study Objectives (Cont'd)

- Review the existing Council composition and develop recommendations for an optimal configuration
- Identify plausible ward boundary options based on the results of the consultation process and the review of Council composition

Study Objectives (Cont'd)

- ❑ Prepare population projections for the development and evaluation of ward boundary options for the next three municipal elections
- ❑ Prepare reports that will set out alternative ward boundaries to ensure effective and equitable electoral arrangements, based on the principles identified

Study Process



Guiding Principles

- Terms of Reference include five guiding principles:
 - **Effective representation** – Evaluate the capacity of each ward to give residents an effective voice in decision making, “as described by the Supreme Court of Canada in its decision on the *Carter* case”
 - **Protection of communities of interest and neighbourhoods** – Draw ward boundary lines around recognized settlement areas, traditional neighbourhoods, and community groupings

Guiding Principles (Cont'd)

- **Representation by population** – Ensure that every Councillor generally represents an equal number of constituents while allowing for some variation
- **Current and future population trends** – Look at future changes in population to keep wards as balanced as possible
- **Physical features as natural boundaries** – Use logical physical and natural features as ward boundaries while keeping wards as compact as possible

Preliminary Considerations

- Historical ward arrangements give insights into the way communities of interest were understood in the past
- But what would a ward system look like today in Oshawa?
- This depends in part on what principle(s) are used and which are given the highest priority → probably more than one way to divide Oshawa for electoral purposes

Preliminary Considerations (Cont'd)

Questions:

- ❑ To fulfill Council's direction and recognize the effects of Durham Region's review, should the number of City Councillors be changed for the 2018 municipal election?
 - 3 + 5 in separate ward systems?
 - 5 + 5 in a single five-ward system?
 - 0 + 5 in a single five-ward system
(but eliminate City Councillors)?

Preliminary Considerations (Cont'd)

Questions:

- Since there are no wards used in municipal elections in Oshawa at present, it will be necessary to design a system of wards to elect members of Council
- What issues do you believe are most important to address in the development of ward boundaries for the City of Oshawa?

Preliminary Considerations (Cont'd)

Questions:

- The development of wards will be guided by a number of principles
 - Which principles do you believe should be given the greatest priority in the design of the wards?

Preliminary Considerations (Cont'd)

Questions:

- To create wards, it will be necessary to combine groups of neighbourhoods into wards
 - Identify the neighbourhood where you live
 - Indicate which neighbourhoods (up to a maximum of 3 or 4) that you believe have the most in common with your neighbourhood

Next Steps

- Prepare an interim “What We Heard” report to Council (January, 2017) that:
 - Summarizes feedback
 - Develops evaluation measures
 - Maps preliminary alternatives
- Interim Report will be presented to Council in early 2017
- Use the Interim Report as the basis for the second round of public consultation (February-March, 2017) on preliminary alternatives

Next Steps (Cont'd)

- ❑ Conduct further analysis and evaluation of preliminary alternatives based on feedback → finalize alternatives
- ❑ Final Recommendations Report (April, 2017) which will be presented to Council in May, 2017 for implementation

Conclusions

- Look for project updates on the City's website as study progresses
 - www.oshawa.ca/owbr2016
 - www.connectoshawa.ca/owbr2016
- Questions/Comments?

Participatory Workshop

Public Input and Participation

- Public input/feedback is critical to the success of this study
- In small group settings, discuss the questions/topics that have been raised here:
 - Options for the composition of Council
 - Issues you believe are most important to address in the development of ward boundaries
 - The Guiding Principles that should be given the greatest priority in the design of the wards
 - Identification of communities of interest

Public Input and Participation (Cont'd)

- ❑ We ask you to provide your input via the Feedback Form
- ❑ Review the poster boards and other materials, discuss with your neighbours – take your time and ask questions
- ❑ Drop completed Feedback Form in the Comments Box
- ❑ Thank you for your participation