



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: December 3, 2012

SUBJECT: Ward Boundary Review 2012 – Consultants Interim Report & Draft Options

PREPARED BY: Stephen Huycke, Acting Deputy City Clerk (x4290)

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the staff report entitled “Ward Boundary Review 2012 – Consultants Interim Report & Draft Options” be received; and,
- 2) THAT the report of Dr. Robert J. Williams, titled “Interim Report 2012 Ward Boundary Review” (Attachment “A”) be received; and,
- 3) THAT Council direct staff to obtain public input on the “Interim Report 2012 Ward Boundary Review” and Council’s preferred option(s) to realign the City’s ward boundaries as outlined in this report; and,
- 4) THAT following public consultation, a final report and recommended options to Markham’s ward boundaries be presented at a future meeting of General Committee; and further,
- 5) THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report is submitted to provide Council with an update on the work of the 2012 Ward Boundary Review. This report seeks Council direction on which preferred option(s) to realign the City’s ward boundaries should be presented in the Ward Boundary Review Phase 3 Public Consultation.

BACKGROUND:

On June 12, 2012, Council adopted Terms of Reference for the 2012 Ward Boundary Review (see Attachment “F”). This review was initiated to address significant population variances between the City’s eight (8) wards. Council also authorized staff to retain Public Affairs Consultant, Dr. Robert J. Williams, University of Waterloo Professor Emeritus of Political Science, to facilitate and coordinate the ward boundary review.

Principles of the Ward Boundary Review

The Terms of Reference established principles under which the review is being conducted, namely:

- 1) Consideration of representation by population: To the extent possible, wards should have relatively equal population totals. Given the geography and varying population

densities and characteristics of the municipality, a degree of variation will be acceptable.

- 2) Protection of communities of interest and neighbourhoods: It is desirable to avoid fragmenting traditional neighbourhoods or communities of interest within the municipality. It is considered desirable to keep historic communities contained within a ward. New communities should be represented within a single ward when possible.
- 3) Consideration of present and future population trends: Given the varying rates of population growth across Markham, any proposed ward designs should take into account projected population changes so that wards will be equitable for up to three (3) terms of Council.
- 4) Consideration of physical features as natural boundaries: Consideration will be given to using natural and man-made features as ward boundaries that already serve as physical boundaries of communities. Where feasible, the preferred features to define a ward boundary are arterial roads, highways, railway lines, rivers and creeks.
- 5) The overriding principle of “effective representation”: The specific principles are all subject to the overriding principle of “effective representation” as enunciated by the Supreme Court of Canada in its decision on the Carter case.

Dr. Williams’ analysis of Markham’s current ward boundaries, and any recommendations to realign those boundaries, is focused on applying these guiding principles to the City’s real world scenario.

Ward Boundary Review Process

The Terms of Reference established a broad work plan for the ward boundary review, divided into 4 distinct phases:

- Phase 1 – Initial Public Consultation
- Phase 2 – Interim Report and Draft Options for Council consideration
- Phase 3 – Second Public Consultation
- Phase 4 – Final Report & Council endorsement of revised ward boundaries

This report completes Phases 1 and 2 of the project.

Phase 1 Outcome – Public Consultations

In keeping with the Terms of Reference, Dr. Williams has engaged in one-on-one meetings/interviews with most Members of Council, as well as facilitated four public meetings. This consultation was the key deliverable of Phase 1. Public meetings were advertised by staff, including: in the Markham Economist & Sun and Thornhill Liberal;

on the City's website; and, by personal invitation sent to all ratepayers groups. The dates and location of the public consultations were as follows:

Ward	Date	Location
Wards 7 & 8	Wednesday, September 19, 2012	Milliken Mills Community Centre
Wards 3 & 6	Thursday, September 20, 2012	Markham Civic Centre
Wards 4 & 5	Thursday, October 11, 2012	Markham Civic Centre
Wards 1 & 2	Wednesday, October 17, 2012	Thornhill Community Centre

At the public sessions, Dr. Williams delivered a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment "G") providing an overview of the principles contained in the Terms of Reference as well as high level analysis of challenges and options in realigning the current ward boundaries.

Phase 2 Outcomes – Interim Report & Draft Options

In Phase 2, Dr. Williams was tasked with developing an Interim Report and draft of options to realign the current ward boundaries. The interim report, including four (4) proposed options to realign the ward boundaries, is included as Attachment "A". Dr. Williams' findings, as discussed below, are based on the public consultation and a review of empirical data available.

The empirical data required to conduct an effective ward boundary review pertains to the population and population growth projections for the City. Identifying a single, stable, and widely accepted dataset was a necessary task for Dr. Williams and staff. In consultation with the Planning Department, it was determined that the regional population figures associated with traffic zones would best serve the review. The population totals for Markham are derived from the Region of York Official Plan and are binding on the City for planning purposes. The Region has the authority to set the population and employment forecasts for Markham under provincial legislation. The same data is used by the City to inform our financial and infrastructure studies, assuring geographic consistency regarding forecast growth. It should also be noted that the population forecasts are prepared using a methodology that is consistent with that used by the Province.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Overview Interim Report

The Interim Report submitted to the City is written to provide Council with important information necessary to make informed decisions in guiding future phases of the Ward Boundary Review. Key topics of discussion include:

1. Background on the development of Markham's political structures (*Interim Report*, pp. 3-6);

2. A high-level overview of the guiding principles (*Interim Report*, pp. 10-11), as well as an in depth discussion of each of principles (*Interim Report - Appendix B – pp. 47-56*);
3. A review of the current ward boundaries in view of the guiding principles (*Interim Report*, pp. 14-19); and,
4. Four (4) options to realign the current ward boundaries (*Interim Report*, pp. 20-45).

Overview of the Draft Options

Dr. Williams has developed four (4) options to change the boundaries of the City's wards so that those boundaries more closely align to the guiding principles than is currently the case. Details of each of the four options can be found in the report, and attached maps, as follows:

1. Option A – report pages 20 to 24; map Attachment “B”
2. Option B – report pages 25 to 29; map Attachment “C”
3. Option C - report pages 30 to 35; map Attachment “D”
4. Option D – report pages 36 to 41; map Attachment “E”

The report analyzes each of these options against the guiding principles. Consideration of representation by population is a significant portion of the analysis. For each option, Dr. Williams examined the population of each proposed ward against the ‘Optimal Ward Size’ calculated by dividing the estimated population by eight.

Optimal Ward Size

Year	Total Population (estimated)	Optimal Ward Size (pop/8)	Lower Population Limit (Optimal -25%)	Upper Population Limit (Optimal +25%)
2011	309,233	38,654	28,990	48,318
2016	337,877	42,235	31,676	52,794
2021	370,255	46,282	34,711	57,853

The population analysis covers three years, 2011, 2016, and 2021. While a goal of the review is to achieve ward boundaries with relatively equitable population figures for three election cycles (2014, 2018 & 2022), population estimates for the City are only available in five-year intervals. To mitigate any effect this may have on alignment of the ward boundaries in the future, staff, as part of the final report to Council, will be recommending that the City review the population of the wards following the election in 2018.

In addition to consideration of representation by population, the report reviews each of these options against the remaining guiding principles and draws conclusions on which options best conform to the principles overall. Based on this analysis, Dr. Williams states that, “...Option D appears to rise to the top of the list of alternatives, followed by Option C and B. Option A has some merits but contains one ward that makes the design less suitable – but not completely unworkable – as an alternative.” (*Interim Report*, p. 43)

Staff are requesting Council direction on which of the four options should be considered in Phase 3 and 4 of the 2012 Ward Boundary Review.

Next Steps

Staff and the consultant are preparing to initiate Phase 3 and 4 of the project, namely, a second public consultation, and the crafting of a final report and ward boundary realignment options for Council consideration. The terms of reference require Phase 3 and 4 of the project to be completed by the end of March 2013. Staff recommend that this time-line be expedited, targeting presentation of the final report for the beginning of March.

Staff recommend that Phase 3, the second public consultation, include one (1) public meeting to be held at the Civic Centre towards the end of January 2013. Staff are also recommending that residents be invited to submit written comments on the interim report and options to realign the ward boundaries for a period of time ending on January 31, 2013. Staff plan to advertise the call for written submissions and the public meeting in the local newspapers, on the City's website, and by personal invitation to registered ratepayers associations.

Following the completion of the Phase 3 public meeting, Dr. Williams will draft his final report and make changes to the draft ward boundary options as required. These will be presented to General Committee and Council for further consideration. It should be noted that under Section 222(8)(a) of the Municipal Act, a by-law to change the current ward boundaries comes into force on the day the new Council of a municipality is organized, provided that the by-law is passed (and any appeal to the OMB is settled) prior to January 1 of the year in which a regular election is held. For any change of the current ward boundaries to come into force for the 2014-2018 Council Term, the by-law must be passed and any OMB appeal settled by December 31, 2013.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE:

None

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

None

RECOMMENDED BY:

12/5/2012


X

Martha Pettit
Acting City Clerk

04/12/2012


X

Trinela Cane
Commissioner of Corporate Services

ATTACHMENTS:

[Attachment A – “Interim Report 2012 Ward Boundary Review”, prepared by Dr. Robert J. Williams](#)

[Attachment B – Option A – Proposed Ward Boundary Realignment](#)

[Attachment C – Option B – Proposed Ward Boundary Realignment](#)

[Attachment D – Option C – Proposed Ward Boundary Realignment](#)

[Attachment E – Option D – Proposed Ward Boundary Realignment](#)

[Attachment F – 2012 Ward Boundary Review Terms of Reference](#)

[Attachment G – Phase 1 Public Consultation Presentation](#)